



INDIA NEEDS GANDHI

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SHRIMAN NARAYAN

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## By Way Of Preface

India is today faced with a variety of difficult and rather intricate problems in the social, economic, educational and political spheres. Even after about three decades of freedom, we have not been able to find satisfactory solutions to the challenges of poverty, low production, unemployment, student unrest, widespread corruption, costly elections, class conflicts and violence. The moral fibre of the people has been weakened almost beyond repair. Unscrupulous pursuit of material welfare, without heeding certain ethical values, has eaten into the very vitals of our national life and culture.

In retrospect, I am convinced beyond doubt that the only practical way to resolve our difficulties in a lasting manner is to turn once again to the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, study them in depth and find proper solutions for our ailments. The Mahatma was, doubtless, a practical leader; his approach to various issues was always scientific and rational. One may not agree with all the details of his fundamental philosophy, but we cannot afford to by-pass his basic advice and guidance which has stood the test of time. In my view, the quintessence of Gandhian thought is that pure means must always be employed for the achievement of noble objectives. We shall be overlooking this eternal law at grave peril to ourselves and the nation.

In these articles, some published but mostly unpublished, I have attempted to interpret several aspects of Gandhian Thought in a simple and rational manner, specially for the benefit of the younger generation. To me it is as clear as daylight that India urgently needs Gandhian angle and approach for tackling her serious problems in a successful way. ~~Gandhi~~

must not be regarded as 'a relic of the past'; he is definitely the Prophet of the Future.

*Gandhi Smarak Nidhi,  
Rajghat, New Delhi.  
15 December, 1975*

*Shriman Narayan*

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## CHAPTER I

# India Needs Gandhi

It has, perhaps, become our national habit to adore and worship great saints and leaders and then conveniently forget their ideals. These days it is almost a fashion to ask whether Gandhian ideas were still relevant under modern conditions. In my view, this question itself is thoroughly irrelevant because Gandhi stood for certain eternal principles which were relevant during his lifetime, are relevant today and would continue to be so for centuries to come.

The more I think about diverse problems facing India at present, the more I feel convinced that Gandhian approach alone will be able to solve our difficulties on a lasting basis. In fact, it was the well-known international economist Dr. Gunnar Myrdal who reminded us recently that Indian planners had failed mainly because 'they had not kept so close as they should to the fundamentals of the teachings of the Father of the Nation.' A large number of books on Gandhian Thought are being published in foreign countries with an increasing sense of appreciation and it appears that we may have the misfortune of importing Gandhi once again from the West. This would, indeed, be a tragedy too deep for tears.

### *Purity of Means*

What are our present ailments and how did Gandhi

seek to remedy them? First of all, the Mahatma repeatedly reminded us that the means were as important as the ends. He asserted: "Realisation of the goal is in exact proportion to that of the means; this is a principle that admits of no exception." He added: "Socialism is as pure as crystal. It, therefore, requires crystal-like means to achieve it. Impure means will result in impure ends." Those of us who talk very loudly about socialism must take note of this sound advice. Gandhi's insistence on the purity of means was not an abstract philosophy but down-to-earth wisdom, and we shall be overlooking it at grave peril.

### **'Plain Living and High Thinking'**

Gandhi also wanted us to constantly bear in mind the noble ideal of 'plain living and high thinking'. This again was not a saintly dictum; it is founded on the hard economic realities which the Western countries are now recognising with deep conviction. The Club of Rome, consisting of top economists and scientists of the world, has come out with a well-reasoned thesis that there were obvious limits to growth and, that mere 'growth-phobia' would land us in unlimited troubles for the future. The physical and natural resources are essentially limited in quantity and their indiscriminate use for conspicuous consumption and spend-thrift affluence would, doubtless, create very difficult conditions for humanity. It is true that the progress of modern science and technology had led to increased production of agriculture and industry in various ways. Even so, this technology tends to generate its own crop of problems relating to unemployment, centralization and phenomenal pollution of the environment. Professor W.W. Rostow, well-known author of 'The Stages of Economic Growth' has now revised his scheme and added the last stage for improving the 'quality of life' after the process of 'high-consumption'. Dr. Galbraith has been highlighting the 'public purpose' of economics in

his recent writings in order to come to grips with the unevenness in growth between different sectors. The two outstanding thinkers of the United Kingdom, Dr. Arnold Toynbee and J.B. Priestley, believe that Western civilisation based on continuous growth of GNP would soon collapse beyond repair. We in India, therefore, will have to revise our basic aims of Planning and while augmenting production to ensure minimum levels of living for our masses, take adequate care to underline human and ethical values for improving the moral fibre of the people on which Gandhi laid so much emphasis. Otherwise, we shall be indulging in a wild-goose chase and, then, repent at leisure.

### Employment for All

The highest priority in Planning must necessarily be full employment. When I asked Gandhiji in the late thirties at Sevagram about his views on machinery, he quipped: "Do you think I am a faddist? All that I desire is that every able-bodied person in India who wants to work for earning his livelihood should be provided with productive employment. If this could be achieved with largescale mechanisation, I shall wind up my programme of Khadi and Village Industries." He continued: "Khadi mentality means decentralisation of production and distribution of the necessities of life." The Mahatma was convinced beyond doubt that it would be impossible to provide for full employment in a poor and over-populated country like India without planning for 'production by the masses' in place of 'mass production', of course, with improved techniques. He was not against the establishment of certain key and heavy industries. But, according to him, they should be managed and controlled by the State and should occupy the "least part of the vast national activities which will mainly be in the villages."

During President's Rule in Gujarat in 1971, I had ex-

tended an open invitation to the rural population throughout the State that all those who seek employment shall be made available some work or other under the Central, State or local development schemes. If nothing else was possible, the unemployed men and women would be given a two-spindle Ambar charkha so that, after brief training, they could earn enough to keep their body and soul together. I found that thousands of persons had to be provided with these spinning wheels for ensuring employment even in Gujarat which is one of the highly industrialised States in the country. Gandhiji's stress on Khadi and Village industries should, therefore, be understood in the proper context and the challenge of full employment must be met by the Governments squarely, without further delay. Starting a few Pilot Projects here and there and promising employment to all citizens after a few more Five Year Plans, would, surely, amount to a mockery of our National Planning.

### Why Prohibition ?

I have repeatedly stated that Prohibition ought to be regarded as an integral part of the 'Garibi Hatao' programme. It would be very wrong to regard it as a mere 'Gandhian fad.' In truth, it would not be feasible to raise the living standards of the poor masses below the poverty line without weaning them away from the temptation of drink. Bapu had gone to the length of saying that if he were appointed a dictator even for one hour in India, 'the first thing he would do will be to close without compensation all the liquor shops.' Our State Governments today are vying with one another in 'rationalising' Prohibition with a view to earning more excise revenue for their development Plans. It is little realised that for every rupee the State Exchequer receives, the poorest segments of the people have to throw down the drain at least three, if not four, rupees. It was, indeed, tragic to read in the newspapers some time ago that

the A.I.C.C. during its recent Session in Delhi spent several hours in discussing whether Khadi and non-drinking of liquor should still remain conditions for the active membership of the Indian National Congress. If the Ruling party deals with Gandhiji's primary ideas in such a casual fashion, it would soon forfeit the confidence of the masses.

### Nai Talim

The Mahatma had once observed: "I have given many programmes to India during my life-time. But I regard 'Nai Talim' as the last and the best gift to the Nation." Unhappily, the Central and State Governments have not yet thought it worthwhile even to give this educational scheme a proper trial. The most eminent educationist of our age, Professor John Dewey, had told me several years ago in New York that he regarded Gandhiji's scheme of Basic Education as 'one step ahead of all other schemes'. In fact, he felt sorry that he was too old to make further experiments on Gandhian lines. But our own educationists in this country seem to have developed some kind of an allergy to Gandhiji's ideas and go on repeating certain catch-phrases like 'work experience' and 'vocationalisation'. I have no iota of doubt that all the difficulties with which we are plagued today in the educational institutions will not get resolved until we decide firmly to impart training at all levels through productive and socially useful activities and link education with growth and development. Examinations must be based on continuous assessment of the activities undertaken by students from day to day, including production and community service. This is the only way to render our educational system purposeful and make a dent on educated unemployment.

### Decentralisation of Power

Decentralisation of economic and political power was the key-note of Gandhian thought. According to Bapu,

"Swaraj Government will be a sorry affair if people look up to it for the regulation of every detail of life." Writing in the 'Harijan' only twelve days before his martyrdom, the Mahatma warned: "True democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the Centre; it has to be worked from below by the people of every village." That is why he urged the need for introducing Panchayati Raj in India. In fact, it was on my suggestion that Gandhiji wrote a strong article on the subject and the Constituent Assembly was obliged to add Article 40 in the Indian Constitution directing the State to take steps "to organise Village Panchayats and endow them with such power and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government." I am, however, sorry to say that the Panchayat system as it exists today is far below Gandhiji's expectations. The concept of Gramdan evolved by Rishi Vinoba deserves much better attention at the hands of State Governments. It is quite evident that the burning problems of inflation, poverty and corruption cannot be tackled satisfactorily without endowing Gram Sabhas with adequate powers to manage their own affairs in a substantial measure. We have been talking about 'planning from below' all these years, but hardly anything tangible has been achieved so far in this direction.

Sir Arthur Lewis, the renowned expert on Planning, in the course of his Dorab Tata Memorial Lectures in Bombay last October, underscored the necessity for decentralisation of small industries in the rural areas. It is, perhaps, not sufficiently understood by our Planners that from the point of view of national economy it is much better to provide employment to a person in his own village rather than force him to migrate into a city. It requires at least fifty times additional expenditure to employ a villager when he shifts to a town as compared with the resources needed to provide him with gainful work in the countryside itself.

Professor Lewis also pleaded strongly for utilising human motive power in place of machinery, as far as possible, for saving capital in developing countries like India. Non-productive expenditure must be slashed to the very marrow for containing the inflationary spiral. Swadeshi and self-reliance should be our watch-words.

### Linking Wages with Productivity

Production in India, both in agriculture and industry, could be stepped up only if, after ensuring a minimum level, wages are linked with productivity. Several years ago, the first Deputy Premier of the Soviet Union visited the Bhilai Steel Plant and expressed his great surprise that India had not introduced the piece-wage system which was widely followed in Russia. We have enacted very 'progressive' Labour laws which encourage workers to insist only on their rights without fulfilling their basic obligation to enhance productivity. Gandhiji had, in his own inimitable words, remarked: "I know of only one right, and that is the right to do one's duty." If we ignore this pivotal policy, all schemes of raising production in the country for controlling prices would remain on paper.

### 'Turn the Searchlight Inward'

Lastly, Gandhiji wanted us to 'turn the searchlight inward,' instead of pelting stones at others. All reforms, including the rooting out of corruption from public life, must begin with oneself. If each person who shouts loudly about corruption these days is himself incorruptible, the polluted atmosphere would register a remarkable change in no time. When a Professor asked Gandhiji about his message to the Nation while he was walking bare-footed from village to village in the Noakhali region, the Mahatma replied "When you feel within yourself that you are right but everything around you is wrong, the conclusion you should draw for



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yourself is that everything is all right, but there is something wrong with you."

I have no shadow of doubt that India needs Gandhi to-day more than ever before. Gandhi is not a relic of the past, but the Prophet of the future. He is very much alive and would remain so for decades to follow. These are the words of the Mahatma himself: "So long as my faith burns bright, as I hope it will even if I stand alone, I shall be alive in the grave, and what is more, speaking from it." In one of his latest publications, Louis Fischer declares:

"If man is to survive, if civilisation is to survive and flower in freedom, truth and democracy, the remainder of the twentieth century and what lies beyond must belong not to Lenin or Trotsky, not to Marx or Mao or Ho or Che, but to Mahatma Gandhi."

## CHAPTER II

### Concept of 'Trusteeship'

In accordance with the 'Preamble', 'the Fundamental Rights' and the 'Directive Principles' of the Constitution of India, the Union Government has been following a policy of 'mixed economy' under which both the public and private sectors have been assigned the necessary scope to function within their respective spheres as integral parts of national planning. The Directive Principles of our Constitution enjoin the State 'to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting, as effectively as it may, a social order in which Justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of national life.'

In December 1954, the Parliament of India adopted the 'socialist pattern of society' as the objective of social and economic policy. The Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956 made it abundantly clear that while 'the State will progressively assume a predominant and direct responsibility for setting up new undertakings, the private sector will have the opportunity 'to develop and expand', preferably on co-operative lines. It was also explained that though 'industrial undertakings in the private sector have necessarily to fit into the framework of the social and economic policy of the State and will be subject to control and regulation in terms of the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act of

1951, it would be desirable to allow such undertakings to develop with as much freedom as possible, consistent with the targets and objectives of the National Plan.'

### The 'Socialist Pattern'

The Second Five Year Plan did not treat 'the Socialist pattern of society' as a rigid dogma and pointed out that 'each country has to develop according to its own genius and traditions.' Further, 'it is neither necessary nor desirable that the economy should become a monolithic type of organisation offering little play for experimentation either as to form or as to modes of functioning.' The Third Plan too stated in unambiguous language that 'with the rapid expansion of the economy, wider opportunities of growth arise for both the public and private sectors and in many ways their activities are complementary.' It was rightly stressed that undertakings in the private sector should act 'with an understanding of obligations towards the community as a whole.' The Fourth Plan, while maintaining the basic framework of the earlier policy, wanted the Government to ensure that 'in the implementation of the programmes the weakest are looked after first and the benefits of development are made to flow by planned investment in the under-developed regions and among the more backward sections of the community.' It declared: 'In the last analysis, planned economic development should result in a more even distribution of benefits, a fuller life for an increasingly large number of people, and the building up of a strong and integrated democratic nation.' The paper on 'Approach to the Fifth Plan' underscored the need of "values and attitudes of a free and just society" for the attainment of the basic goals of economic self-reliance—removal of poverty, full employment and the provision of minimum needs to millions of our people.

### A Trend towards Nationalisation

During recent years, however, for various reasons there has been a noticeable trend towards nationalisation of several key sectors of our economy. For example, the Commercial Banks, General Insurance, Coal Mines and the whole sale trade in wheat have been taken over by the State. We need not go into the *raison d'être* of this policy and raise unhelpful controversies. Nonetheless, the fact remains that due to frequent statements made by those in authority an atmosphere of uncertainty has been generated in the country about the future of private enterprise in trade and industry.

It is, therefore, gratifying to note the recent announcement of the Government of India that there was no intention of amending the Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956, and that both the public and private sectors would be permitted to play their respective roles within the overall framework of planned development. The Prime Minister and the Union Finance Minister have also reiterated in unmistakable terms that the Government had no idea of resorting to further nationalisation for its own sake and that it would be considered only if absolutely necessary. Furthermore, Shrimati Indira Gandhi has observed on several occasions that India must chalk out her own pattern of Socialism and not become a 'carbon copy' of socialist structures obtaining in other countries. This is a very correct and sound statement of our national policy and ought to be supported by all sections of the population. Let us hope, however, that the Union Government would soon publish for general information specific criteria and guidelines for nationalisation of trade and industry in the future, so that the current climate of suspicion and uncertainty yields place to an atmosphere of confidence and stability.

### Social Responsibilities

Even so, it is high time the private sector read the signs of the times and recognised its own social obligations in the spheres of trade and industry. It must be conceded frankly that, despite several declarations at a few Seminars and Conferences regarding Codes of Conduct and Fair Trade Practices, the image of the private entrepreneurs in the minds of the common people continues to remain blurred and tarnished. It is now for the leaders of the private sector to recreate confidence among the general public about their bona fides so that they may be able to play their legitimate part in the attainment of a fast rate of growth in the coming years.

The private sector may have some genuine difficulties which stand in the way of its effective participation in the economic life of the nation. These could be discussed candidly with the representatives of the Union and State Governments in order to find satisfactory solutions. But the necessary milieu for such a dialogue would be generated only if the people regained implicit faith in the good intentions of the business community.

### Gandhiji's Concept of 'Trusteeship'

In this context, it will be worthwhile recollecting Mahatma Gandhi's idea about 'trusteeship' which, though much misunderstood, may still offer a better alternative to both capitalism as well as the Western type of Socialism. It is often thought that the 'trusteeship' concept was meant to lend a prop to the capitalist system and give it a new lease of life. This is an entirely erroneous notion. In fact, Gandhiji wanted to give to the present owning class 'a chance of reforming itself,' as he had undying faith in the innate goodness of human nature. His formula drafted in the detention camp of the Aga Khan Palace during the 'Quit India' rebellion, specifically mentioned that 'trusteeship

provides a means of transforming the present capitalist order into an egalitarian one.' It was also made amply clear that the concept 'does not exclude legislative regulation of the ownership and use of wealth.'

The Mahatma, far from giving any quarter to capitalism, was eager to harness the talent and experience of the industrialists and businessmen for the welfare of the common man. He made a distinction between 'possession' and 'possessiveness'. Even if all the owners were forcibly dispossessed, acquisitive or possessive instinct would remain. It could be transmuted into an instrument of social good by the application of the principle of trusteeship. Gandhiji remarked: "Wholesale expropriation of the owning class and distribution of its assets among the people in Russia did create a tremendous amount of revolutionary fervour. But I claim that ours will be an even bigger revolution. We must not underrate the business talent and know-how which the owning class have acquired through generations of experience and specialisation. Free use of it would accrue to the people under my plan."

There is one more point which deserves our special attention. Gandhiji could foresee that under Socialism achieved either through violence or coercive legislation, the acquisitive instinct would lead to further inequalities of income and wealth in normal course, as is actually happening in the Soviet Union and China, due to a variety of material incentives provided by the State for augmenting production. It is, therefore, essential to foster outstanding talent and hold it in trust to be used in the interest of society. "Otherwise, it would again give rise to a privileged class, no matter under what name or garb. As the only answer to this problem of recurring inequalities arising from 'residuary owner-

ship; the doctrine of Trusteeship has a perennial value and use."

"In addition," said Gandhiji, "trusteeship avoids the evils of violence, regimentation and suppression of individual liberty." He added: "Even if large sectors of industry were nationalised and put under State ownership the existence of individual enterprise alongside of it under a trusteeship system would provide a healthy antidote to slackness, inefficiency, corruption, lack of enterprise and bureaucratic autocracy which very often characterise State enterprise. Trusteeship alone, thus, provides a possible escape from the dilemma, 'make men free and they become unequal; make them equal and they cease to be free.'"

It is significant that despite Chairman Mao Tse-tung's concerted drive for stabilising 'an egalitarian dictatorship of the proletariat,' the fact remains that there are some Chinese who still harbour bourgeois tendencies to make money. In a land where humble self-sacrifice is the ideological norm, such a notion is outright heresy, and to curb it Mao over the years has launched regular, almost evangelical crusades against capitalism and its corrupting influences. Recently, newspapers and radios all across China denounced the lingering lust for what the Chairman himself called "personal fame and gain." As a result, the party cadres have been asked to adopt the "pauper spirit," by refusing to attend dinner parties, accept gifts or listen to flattery.<sup>1</sup>

### In line with Indian Heritage

Viewed in this perspective, Gandhiji's 'trusteeship' idea is not a Utopian theory but a practical concept in line with the Indian heritage. Our ancestors and rishis always upheld the idea of simplicity and renunciation. It is this way of

<sup>1</sup> Mahatma Gandhi, *The Last Phase*, by Pyarelal (Naxos), p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129.

<sup>3</sup> *The New York Times*, June 9, 1975.

life which has been the hall-mark of Oriental culture and civilization. The business class will have to make a choice between the possibility of wholesale nationalisation by the State and voluntarily converting themselves into trustees of their wealth and property. If worked out properly, the 'trusteeship' formula could provide the *modus operandi* for such a transformation in a smooth and peaceful manner. Said Gandhiji: "I adhere to my doctrine of trusteeship in spite of the ridicule that has been poured upon it. It is true it is difficult to reach. So is non-violence difficult to attain. But we made up our minds in 1920 to negotiate that steep ascent. We have found it worth the effort."

The 'trusteeship' principle need not be restricted to material wealth and property alone, it should encompass artistic, professional, and intellectual skills and even spiritual attainments. Whatever qualities a man possesses are gifts from Nature and should be used not merely for his own interests but for the good of humanity. This is the quintessence of Indian thought through the ages.

### Its Practical Implications

"I am prepared to renounce my millions and give up my business to follow you," said a multi-millionaire to Gandhiji one day. "I do not want you to renounce either your millions or your business," replied Bapu, "I want to make use of both for the service of the poor." It is this challenge and invitation which has to be accepted by the businessmen of India with grace and dignity. Unfortunately, no concrete steps could be taken in this respect during Gandhiji's own lifetime, and twenty-eight years have rolled by after the dawn of Independence. In any event, it is never too late to make a beginning. Happily, Acharya Vinoba is still with us to give the necessary advice and guidance. Let



## INDIA NEEDS GANDHI

ize this rare opportunity and work out the practical applications of 'trusteeship' without any further loss of time. Some time ago, Vinobaji placed before the country a familiar arithmetical equation: 100 per cent private sector + 100 per cent public sector = 100. This really implies that the present distinction between the two sectors should gradually fade away and both should subserve the vital interests of the masses to the best of their ability. This objective could be achieved successfully if the private sector, instead of caring, in the main, for easy and quick profits, recognised and discharged its social responsibilities with earnestness, and the public sector too became more productive and efficient, yielding sizable surpluses for national development. There has to be a healthy emulation between both these sectors for raising the living standards of the toiling millions as expeditiously as feasible.

### Need for Collective Self-discipline

So far as the private sector is concerned, the first need is, obviously, of imposing collective self-discipline. Various Chambers of Commerce and Industry and their Federations ought to undertake this onerous but imperative task in an organised way. They must evolve a proper Code of Conduct through free and frank discussions and, then, set up a vigilant machinery for its implementation. Luckily, some work has already been done in this direction. For instance, the Fair Trade Practices Association has worked out a Code of Conduct for its members and is trying to enforce it as thoroughly as possible. The Delhi Seminars on Social Responsibilities in Business (1965) and of Trade Unions (1966) did cover a fairly wide ground and issued their declarations with considerable clarity and precision. A few efforts have also been made in India and abroad, more especially in the U.K. and West Germany, to introduce the Trusteeship concept in trade and industry. Thus, a good enough be-

has been made in this sphere and, given the requisite motivation and encouragement, there is no reason why further progress could not be registered in this direction quite soon.

### The Cooperative Structure

The Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956 made a pointed reference to the Government's decision that within the private sector 'special assistance will be given to enterprises organised on cooperative lines for industrial and agricultural progress.' The Third Five Year Plan also mentioned that 'progressively, the private sector has to take the form of cooperative effort.' In tune with this policy, the Central and State Governments have been extending a number of facilities to cooperative enterprises in the fields of agriculture, dairy-farming, industry, marketing, transport, housing and construction. In a planned economy pledged to the values of socialism and democracy, cooperation should, naturally, become the principal basis of organisation in as many branches of economic life as possible. The cooperative movement has the merit of combining the advantages of individual initiative as well as the participation and support of the community. That is why Gandhiji also had a preference for the cooperative way and introduced it in the organisation of Khadi, Village Industries and Dairy development. It is, therefore, hoped that private sector enterprises in India would increasingly adopt the cooperative structure with a view to spreading the benefits of development to a larger number of people, specially the weaker sections.

The success of the cooperative movement, however, would largely depend on the efficiency, integrity and training of the workers. Here again the business community could lend a helping hand and win the confidence and goodwill of the masses.

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In all genuine cooperative organisations, it would be

desirable to enrol permanent workers as members. Otherwise, the existing conflict between workers and management would continue even in the cooperative ventures. For example, workers in the Cooperative Sugar Factories and Cooperative Dairies ought to be allowed to participate in the share capital of these establishments. This would generate among the workers a sense of responsibility and involvement and make the factories cooperative enterprises in the real sense of the term. It is, however, essential that Unions in these companies are allowed to grow on the basis of local leadership of the workers, without the outside interference of politically-dominated Trade Unions.

### Decentralisation of Industries

While Gandhiji conceded that the heavy and key industries had to be necessarily organised in the large-scale sector, he favoured the decentralisation of consumer goods industries for providing productive employment to millions of idle hands in the countryside. Excessive mechanisation may be inescapable in countries where capital is abundant and labour force scarce. But in an underdeveloped country like India where capital is scarce and man-power abundant, the only practical way of harnessing the energy of the mass of people is to employ labour-intensive but efficient technology in a network of small-scale, village and cottage industries organised on cooperative lines. During the four Five Year Plans, it has not been possible to liquidate poverty in India by ensuring full employment to our people all these years. It is now recognised on all hands that decentralisation of industries, in both rural as well as urban areas, is absolutely necessary for attaining this primary goal. This is not to say that the fruits of modern science and technology should not be utilised for the decentralised sector. We should try to use middle of 'appropriate' technology by striking a happy balance between man-power and machine power.

The First Five Year Plan had suggested the formulation of 'common production programmes' for each industry so that spheres of production could be reserved or demarcated for the major, medium, small and cottage sectors to avoid unhealthy competition between different categories. This suggestion was repeated in the Second Five Year Plan. Unfortunately, however, it has not been possible to implement this idea properly so far. If we are serious about enlarging the scope of the decentralised sector, it is imperative that the field for village and cottage industries is clearly earmarked. Only then would it be really possible to absorb a larger number in these smaller industries for providing gainful employment to all those who ask for it.

Here also, the private entrepreneurs can use their talent and business acumen in promoting small-scale industries in villages and cities. The Industrial Houses could support the decentralised units by placing with them orders for different components, instead of trying to manufacture all these parts themselves. Such a process may present several difficulties, such as finding suitable persons in villages and towns, giving them adequate technical training, and arranging for them financial assistance from various sources. The supply of raw materials and managerial skills will also have to be organised in a systematic manner. But I have little doubt that if the business community devotes its attention to these matters, it can make a real dent on the problem of unemployment and, what is more, under-employment, especially in the backward regions.

### **Duty towards Shareholders**

It is evident that progressive business in India and elsewhere, besides making a fair return on capital, must look after the legitimate interests of the shareholders, the workers, the customers and the community in general. It is, surely, the duty of the Management to see that the enterprise is stable

and profit-making. However, a distinction should be drawn between profit-making and profiteering. While profiteering is, certainly, anti-social, it is the duty of the Managers to ensure that the factory makes reasonable profits, partly for being ploughed back in the industry, and partly for paying dividends to the share capital. The Directors should also supply to the shareholders regular and accurate financial information about the company from time to time.

The shareholders too should take a vigilant interest in the functioning of the company by regularly attending the annual meetings as also by sending frequent queries to the Directors relating to the accounts and other aspects of business. Additionally, they should impress upon the Management the desirability of safeguarding the interests of the employees, the customers and the community.

### Justice to Workers

Besides investment of capital, hard labour done by the workers is equally important for the success of an enterprise. Mahatma Gandhi, therefore, regarded the workers as 'co-sharers' or 'co-trustees' of a factory. In fact, the difference between an employer and employee in the context of a socialist society becomes rather meaningless and even odious. All those who work in an establishment, including the Directors and Managers are, in a sense, fellow-workers who must jointly put their shoulders to the wheel and make the enterprise sound and efficient. It is the responsibility of the Management to win the cooperation of labour by creating conditions in which the workers can put in their best efforts for accelerating production. The workers right to a fair wage, the right to participate in management relating to decisions affecting their life and welfare, collective bargaining and even the right to strike in exceptional cases, should be recognised as part of the Code of Conduct. The workers should be helped through

education and training to throw up their own leadership and gradually develop the capacity to participate in the management of the company. Labour Unions, too, instead of merely agitating for higher wages, bonus and dearness allowances, must look to the interests of the factory as a whole. That is why Gandhiji laid constant stress on the performance of duties along with insistence on rights.

The best way of involving the workers in management in a responsible manner will, perhaps, be to encourage them to purchase the shares of the factory in an increasing measure. The workers will, then, gradually begin to treat the factory as their own and evince much greater interest in the profits and serious concern for the losses. As trustees, the Managers ought to treat the workers with sympathy and understanding and try to make co-partners in a real sense. The workers, in turn, should understand that the only way to make the industry sound and profitable is to maintain good discipline and increase productivity per unit of labour. Merely clamouring for rights, without hard work to step up production, would lead the country nowhere. To this end, Trade Unionism must be oriented towards a policy of cooperation rather than confrontation.

The existing labour legislation may also be reviewed from this angle. Though the vital interests of the working class have to be adequately protected, the essential factors of discipline and productivity ought to be fully safeguarded. Otherwise, the country shall always be faced with the sad plight of high costs and low production. In the absence of such an understanding, the wages will continue to chase high prices and high prices the wages in endless succession.

So far as the welfare activities for labour are concerned, high priority should be accorded to cheap but comfortable housing, family planning, health and nutrition. Along with allopathic treatment, encouragement may be given to indigenous systems of treatment, including Ayurveda and



Naturopathy. Regarding the supply of essential consumer goods. Vinobaji has repeatedly suggested that part of the wages should be paid in the form of foodgrains at controlled rates.

### Obligation towards Customers

It is the sacred duty of industrial enterprises to afford the maximum possible satisfaction to the customers by supplying them goods at reasonable prices, ensuring high quality and eliminating adulteration at all levels. The current situation in this regard is, to say the least, disgraceful. The laws framed by the Parliament for curbing this malpractice are quite inadequate. Adulteration of goods has, therefore, assumed unimaginable proportions and there is hardly anything in the market, including drugs and medicines, which could be obtained in a pure form. This is a tragedy too deep for words. If the application of 'trusteeship' concept to industry and business is to be made meaningful, these evils must be eradicated by various Chambers of Commerce and Business Associations with a firm hand, through collective self-regulation. Whenever necessary, these Associations should not hesitate to take punitive action and give it due publicity. It is not enough for a factory to manufacture goods of the requisite quality; it must ensure that the agents and distributors supply goods of requisite standards to the consumers as a matter of course.

Businessmen should avoid the publication of misleading advertisements, and invoice exported or imported items at their correct prices. Accuracy in weights and measures has to be maintained. The Code for business should include a declaration that they would not knowingly deal in smuggled goods.

The phenomenon of ever-rising prices due to inflationary pressures is too well known to be recounted here. Reasons for high prices are numerous and complicated, but the

fact remains that the business community, by and large, has been exploiting such situations without much social sense. While a strong consumer movement in cities and villages is the obvious remedy, traders too cannot evade their responsibilities. It is their duty to eschew blackmarketing and co-operate with the Government in keeping the price level of essential commodities under proper checks, specially in times of droughts, floods, and other calamities. The lasting solution, however, is increased production in all spheres so that the economy of shortages is replaced by an economy of abundance.

Let me give here my own experience during the President's Rule in Gujarat. At the outbreak of the Indo-Pakistan war in December 1971, I was faced with the problem of maintaining the price level of about a dozen commodities which entered into the consumption of the common people. Instead of invoking the Defence of India Rules from the very beginning, I thought of inviting the representatives of Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry to discuss the matter. I appealed to them not to allow the prices of these articles to rise even by a paisa during the emergency, though it may become necessary to ration some of them. They promised to consider this subject amongst themselves and see me after two days. On meeting me again, they gave the assurance that my appeal would be fully implemented through their Vigilance Committees at the State and District levels. It was, however, suggested that I should set up a Coordination Committee consisting of a few senior officers and representatives of trade and industry, so that certain contingencies could be resolved promptly through mutual consultations. I did set up such a committee under the Chairmanship of the Home Secretary who was also in charge of Civil Supplies. I am happy to state that during the 14 days of Indo-Pakistan war the price level posed no problems for me and businessmen kept their word of honour in a remarkable way. I do not see

any reason why such experiments of fruitful cooperation between the Government and the traders could not be repeated in other parts of the country.

In place of the Fair Price Shops run by the State, which, incidentally are open to corrupt practices, the business community should organise its own network of retail shops with high standards of honesty and efficiency.

### Service of the Community

So far, Industrial and Business Houses have been extending financial assistance to Government and non-official agencies for relief work in times of famine, floods, earthquakes and other natural disasters; but this is not enough. An active participation in the economic development of the nation, particularly in areas surrounding the factories, should be deemed as an integral part of industrial enterprises. Mere charity and philanthropy will no longer meet the demand of the times. Industrialists and businessmen are now expected to 'adopt' a group of villages, if possible even talukas and districts, for intensive development and to liberally supply the required management skills and techniques to the local community. In the urban areas, slum clearance and improvement, cheap housing for the weakest sections, and programmes for tertiary employment opportunities could be undertaken. Some work of this kind has already been initiated by a few Houses, including the Tatas and the Mafatlal Group. Experience gained in these experiments would stand in good stead for similar creative activities in other areas. Close liaison will have to be maintained with various activities of the Government Departments in these regions. There should be due emphasis not merely on welfare activities but on helping the people to help themselves for supplementing their meagre incomes. Alongside agriculture, agro-industries, animal husbandry and dairying have to be organised in a scientific manner. Such area planning a line would make it possible for us

to eradicate poverty from the Indian countryside and lay stable foundations for future prosperity. Scientific study, evaluation, and research by Industrial Houses in the sphere will be very helpful and rewarding.

### *Social Audit*

It has been suggested that for proving the real benefits of community service by the private sector, a suitable machinery for social audit should be set up to submit periodical reports. Men trained in social sciences, with the help of Universities and technical colleges, may assess the social performance of the Companies, just as the auditors assess the financial performance of these units. On the basis of such audit reports, the Government and the general public would get a vivid idea about the quality of social and constructive work actually accomplished by the private enterprises in different fields of development. These reports could be discussed annually at a local public meeting open to the representatives of consumers, workers, shareholders and the community. The Directors and Managers will have to be ready to answer questions with clarity and frankness so as to carry conviction to the people. Such a procedure would promote public accountability and generate enormous goodwill for the industries concerned.

Factories should also take a serious note of the increasing pollution of air and water due to poisonous effluents contaminating the rivers and even oceans, smoky chimneys poisoning the environment, senseless cutting down of trees and destruction of other types of natural wealth including fertile lands for the erection of buildings and structures. It is hoped that the Union Government would soon enact the necessary legislation in this respect. At any rate, the private sector ought to recognise its own obligations in the matter and cooperate with the State in mitigating the hazards of pollution. Performance in this sphere should form an essential

part of the Social Audit of various establishments. I may add that most of the suggestions mentioned above would apply almost equally to public sector undertakings.

### Payment of Taxes

Several committees and commissions appointed by the Government of India have suggested a variety of measures for checking large-scale tax evasion and avoidance by the business community. A comprehensive Bill, based on the recommendations of the Wanchoo Commission, has already been passed in the Parliament. While the Government would try its best to plug various loopholes in the tax-collection machinery, it is expected of the private sector to carry on clean, honest and socially-conscious business and industry. The existing malpractices should be abandoned by entrepreneurs and businessmen so that the present stigma which defames the private sector is gradually erased from the minds of the people.

The Central Government too may consider a practical suggestion that liberal concessions in Income Tax should be granted on that portion of the income which is invested in high-priority industries specified in the Five Year Plans. It may, perhaps, not be possible for the Ministry of Finance to lower the existing rates of Income Tax for the higher slabs, although such a step was strongly recommended by Professor Kaldor of the United Kingdom about two decades ago, and has been repeated with some variations by the Wanchoo Commission. There will, however, be a positive advantage in giving definite incentives for investment in those sectors which are regarded as crucial for quickening the pace of economic progress. Such a strategy would be a direct incentive to additional resource mobilisation and will discourage tax evasion at least in some measure.

It is clear as crystal that banning donations to political parties by business and industrial establishments has opened

the flood-gates of corruption and black market on an unprecedented scale. It is essential to review this policy and take appropriate action without losing any more time.

Certain other suggestions of the business community on this subject may be considered by the Government for whatever they are worth. What really required is the generation of a conducive climate of trust and confidence between the State and the private sector. Otherwise, the present tug-of-war between fresh legislation and organised tax evasion would continue unabated and the almost parallel economy presently run by black money would tend to undermine the very foundations of our democracy and socialism.

### **Avoidance of Conspicuous Consumption**

In a poor and developing country like India, the need for maximum public savings is of pivotal importance for achieving an accelerated tempo of economic growth. This would be practicable only if there is a general atmosphere of simplicity and austerity in all walks of life. In view of the urgent need for bridging economic disparities in the socialist democracy it is all the more desirable that display of wealth is avoided in all private or public activities. Though this social evil is not confined to the private sector, it would be in the interest of Indian industrialists and businessmen to curb conspicuous consumption with care and attention. It is patent that luxurious expenditure causes unnecessary jealousy and adverse criticism. From the social as well as psychological viewpoints, it would, therefore, be wise to avoid ostentatious living under all circumstances.

It also stands to reason that the production of luxury articles meant for the consumption of the opulent classes should be suitably restricted and there should be accorded a much higher priority for producing goods needed by the masses. This could be one of the ways for raising the living standards of the common man, and bridging the gaping gulf between the rich and the poor under democratic soci

### Crisis of Character

In the ultimate reckoning, India is today faced with a crisis of character which, in my view, is much more serious than other crises connected with violence, rising prices, scarcity of food and essential commodities. The Government and private welfare institutions may prepare first-rate schemes for the social and economic advancement of the country. But without men of doubtless integrity and character for implementing these plans, all our efforts shall inevitably lead to despair and frustration. Bribery and corruption would eat into the very vitals of our national life, and damage our social and moral fabric beyond repair. We have, therefore, to recognise the basic truth that there are human, moral and spiritual values in life which are much more important than mere material affluence.

Any discussion about Gandhiji's 'trusteeship' idea would prove to be an exercise in futility if the primary duty of sustaining ethical standards is not faced squarely. Without an attitude of integrity and earnestness, such discussions would degenerate into a game of 'hide and seek'. Ever-widening distrust between the State and private business would make for distortions in our economy and inescapably lead to the proliferation of bureaucracy in unending circles, engulfing the whole nation in the rising tides of a centralised authority. Let us hope and pray that good sense would prevail on all sides and a practical solution will be hammered out on Gandhian lines without further loss of time.

India is a land of destiny and, instead of imitating other countries, she must forge new patterns and innovations of democracy and socialism which would not only fortify her own interests but also present a unique model to other nations of the world. Winds of change are blowing fast and even with fury, and there is hardly any time to lose in fruitless controversies.

### Conference on Trusteeship .

It is a matter of satisfaction that the Sevagram Ashram Foundation convened a Conference on Trusteeship at Acharya Vinoba's Paunar Ashram near Wardha on 7, 8, 9 September 1973. It was attended by prominent and representative industrialists and businessmen from different parts of India, including Shri Naval Tata, Shri S.P. Godrej, Shri Madanmohan Mangaldas and Shri Ramkrishna Bajaj. The then Union Minister of Industrial Development, Shri C. Subramaniam, also participated in the discussions. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, in a special message, welcomed the idea and hoped that 'under the influence of Vinobaji's thought the Conference would lead to useful and beneficial results'.

After detailed discussions for two days on the basis of a Working Paper prepared by me, the following consensus emerged:

1. In accordance with the Industrial Policy resolution of the Government of India, both the private and public sectors of Industry and business should continue to be given adequate scope for playing their respective roles within the overall frame-work of planned economic development.
2. India is rightly committed to the establishment of a socialist democratic society. But Indian socialism must be evolved in accordance with the nation's innate culture and traditions and, as the Prime Minister has often observed, should not become a "carbon copy" of the socialist patterns obtaining in other countries. In this context, Gandhiji's concept of "Trusteeship", in relation to the consumer, the worker, the shareholder and the community, as spelt out



in the above Working Paper, should be studied in depth with a view to giving it a practical shape for implementation through organised collective action.

3. Concerted efforts will have to be made for increasing production particularly of commodities for the consumption of the masses, and for ensuring their equitable distribution at reasonable prices. Various difficulties in this regard will have to be resolved expeditiously through consultations between Government and representatives of agriculture, trade and industry in an atmosphere of mutual confidence and goodwill.
4. It is also imperative that industry, commerce and trade recognise their own social obligations and take effective steps to implement Fair Trade Practices through self-discipline.
5. In particular, the wide-spread evil of adulteration in consumer goods, specially of food articles and drugs, must be curbed with an iron hand. The business community should extend its fullest cooperation to the Government in its eradication. The anti-adulteration legislation needs to be made much more rigorous and punitive.
6. Active participation in the community service and development programmes, in rural as well as urban areas, ought to be deemed as an essential part of the social responsibility in industrial enterprises.

This consensus statement was subsequently considered in some depth by the Federation of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Fair Trade Practices Association, the Indian Merchants' Chamber and the All India Manufactu-

ners' Organisation at their respective meetings and seminars. It is hoped that this consensus would lead to concrete action on the part of different organisations of Industry and Commerce in the country so that Gandhiji's idea of trusteeship may, in due course, be given a practical shape as a working model for economic development.

## CHAPTER III

### Education for Development

Thirty-eight years ago, a National Education Conference was convened at Wardha in October, 1937, on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the Shiksha Mandal founded by the late Jammalal Bajaj. These deliberations, presided over by Gandhiji himself, gave birth to the system of Basic education which the Mahatma regarded as his "last and the best gift to the nation." This pattern attached the highest value to the imparting of all-round education to children through creative and productive activities which promoted in them the qualities of self-reliance and dignity of labour for a non-exploitative social order. The scheme of Basic education was introduced in almost all the States of India, with varying degrees of success and failures. This is not the time to lay blame at one another's door and indulge in mutual recrimination. However, the fact remains that, for various reasons, Basic education has not yet been given a fair trial in the country. The University Education Commission commended this system for adoption not only at the Primary and Secondary levels but also in the Universities. The Commission on Secondary Education also recommended that "the methods of teaching in schools should endeavour to create in the students a genuine attachment to work and a desire to do it as efficiently,

honestly and thoroughly as possible." The Education Commission made it clear that in their view "the essential principles of Basic education are so important that they should guide and shape the educational system at all levels." And yet, hardly anything has been done so far to implement these ideas in actual practice over the years.

### Basic Education

New terms like 'work-experience' and 'vocationalisation' have been coined for replacing the word 'Basic'. Gandhiji had declared in categorical terms that 'Nai Talim' was meant to be practised from the time of birth to the grave. Recently, the UNESCO Commission on the Development of Education has also recommended the building up of 'a continually evolving body of knowledge all through life—learning to be'. Though I would not like to raise controversies over words, I do not really see why we should fight shy of the term 'basic education' which was described by Dr. John Dewey as 'one step ahead of all other schemes.' Even Professor Gunnar Myrdal, in his monumental publication entitled 'The Asian Drama', has expressed his definite opinion that "basic-oriented primary education could be the ideal solution to the much needed reform of the curriculum and teaching methods in Indian schools."

While the fundamental principles of Basic education, as enunciated by Mahatma Gandhi, are as relevant today as they were thirty-eight years ago, the methodology and the paraphernalia of teaching are bound to undergo a perceptible change. In 1937, India was not a free nation, and there were no Five-Year Plans. Now that we are an independent country and intend launching the Fifth Five-Year Plan with a large outlay amounting to fifty thousand crores of rupees on a variety of programmes and projects in urban as well as rural areas, Basic and Post-Basic schools, instead of concentrating on spinning and weaving alone, could cor-

relate different academic subjects with all the developmental schemes in the neighbourhood. It should no longer be necessary for these educational institutions, except for some training centres, to have their own farms and workshops. They may, of course, possess a set of basic tools and implements. But the whole physical and social environment could serve as their basic activity for the purposes of correlation. Such involvement of the student community in development work would enrich both education as well as the planning processes.

### **The New Educational Structure**

As regards the educational structure for various stages, the Education Commission and the National Education Policy Resolution of the Government of India (1968) have recommended the adoption of 10+2+3 pattern. In my view, this pattern should now be accepted by all the State Governments without entering into further controversies. The first 10 years may be sub-divided into the Basic stage of 7 years and the Post-basic stage of 3 years. In the Basic schools, children should be given general education through creative activities and intimate knowledge of the social environment; the Post-basic schools are expected to impart education with a vocational bias, training students in socially useful and productive crafts suited to local needs and manpower requirements.

During the Higher Secondary stage of 2 years, students may undergo training in many specialised courses of a technical nature which would enable them to earn their living and become self-supporting. It should, however, be open to such students to pursue higher studies at any time in future. These diploma courses may include a variety of subjects like agriculture, animal husbandry, dairying, rural engineering, agro-industries, accountancy, banking and insurance, co-operation, management, salesmanship, teaching, construction,

smithy, laundry, carpentry, radio and automobile repairs, para-medical courses, etc. This list is only illustrative and could be enlarged indefinitely to suit employment opportunities in cities and villages. Various Government Departments could introduce their own diploma courses in accordance with their requirements. It would be desirable to locate these two-year Diploma Courses in Higher Secondary Schools rather than in Colleges, although some degree of elasticity may be necessary in this respect.

In several States, the syllabus for the two-year Course has been framed on traditional lines of 'Intermediate' classes, without introducing practical vocational courses for which there is a felt need in the region. This would fail to achieve the basic objective of the new educational pattern, namely, to siphon off at least half of the student population towards meaningful employment so that the unnecessary rush for admission to Universities is automatically controlled in a substantial measure. In some States like Maharashtra, the new pattern would add one year to the total period of education from the primary to the University stages. If the scheme of two-year Diploma Courses is not implemented in the right way, the students would have to spend one more year for no tangible gains and the parents shall be burdened with additional expenditure without enabling their sons and daughters to settle down in life after completing their Secondary education.

The first Degree Course in the Universities should be of three years' duration, followed by Post-Graduate and Research Courses of varying durations. Here again, greater emphasis has to be laid on vocational and technical courses in agriculture, science, technology, medicine, commerce and business management.

### **Courses of Study**

The Courses of Study at all stages should emphasise three fundamental values:

- (i) Self-reliance and dignity of labour through the use of work as a part of the educational programme;
- (ii) a spirit of nationalism and social responsibility through the involvement of students and teachers in meaningful programmes of community service; and
- ✓(iii) the promotion of a secular outlook *Sarvadharma Samabhava* through a proper understanding of the fundamental unity of all religions.

Incorporation of these basic values in the curricula could be achieved through the following programmes:

- (a) 'Safai' and maintenance of campus;
- (b) Participation in productive work relating to agricultural operations in the school, family farms or the neighbourhood, through suitable adjustment of vocations;
- (c) Teaching of socially useful and productive crafts;
- (d) Cultivation of hobbies;
- (e) Adoption of new methods of teaching which provide opportunities for work with hands to the maximum extent possible in every subject;
- (f) Establishing close contacts between the educational institutions and the community through programmes of mutual service and support;
- (g) Participation in programmes of relief in times of famine, flood, epidemic and other natural calamities; and
- (h) Organising suitable programmes of adult education, including the spread of functional literacy.

At present, there are too many vacations in our educational institutions, they ought to be pruned and adjusted for imparting intensive education according to local needs.

As regards subjects of study, special emphasis should be laid on the teaching of science, mathematics, agriculture and technology.

The Courses of Study should include general knowledge of our composite cultural heritage, a brief history of the Indian freedom movement, emphasising national unity and the fundamental values of non-violence, democracy, social justice and secularism as enshrined in our Constitution. Noticeable progress during the Post-Independence period in various spheres ought to be adequately highlighted.

To this end, text-books of high quality must be placed in the hands of students. The NCERT has been doing valuable work in this direction; it may be further encouraged and intensified. Suitable handbooks containing information about new methods of teaching should be prepared for the teachers as well.

A study of Gandhian Thought should be introduced in the curricula of different subjects like economics, politics, education, sociology, and philosophy, at the secondary and university stages.

Training in *Yogasanas* and the basic principles of Naturopathy should be encouraged.

### Education and Economic Growth

As mentioned earlier, there must be a close and intimate link between education and economic growth or development. As the UNESCO Commission observes, 'care must be taken to harmonize intellectual and manual training and constantly to correlate studies and work.' At the Primary or Basic stage, children should be educated through simple crafts and creative activities in conformity with the physical and social conditions. This should apply to schools in both rural and urban areas, without any distinction.

At the Secondary or Post-Basic stage, there should be



provision for diversified technical and vocational education, so that students could engage themselves in productive activities and develop a spirit of self-reliance. They should be given opportunities to participate in various developmental activities of the area, specially relating to agriculture, animal husbandry and dairying and afforestation in the rural areas and industry, construction, trade and commerce in the urban areas.

At the Higher Secondary stage of two-year duration, students may be trained in a variety of practical courses suitable for cities and villages, after which they could be absorbed in different vocations in accordance with actual requirements.

At the University stage too, agricultural farms, industrial units of different sizes, and a variety of development projects could be attached to different Colleges and Centres of Higher Education. The N.C.C. and N.S.S. programmes ought to be oriented towards constructive and productive activities. The principle of 'earning while learning' could be implemented in a more systematic manner at this stage.

### **Education and Social Justice**

In order to build up a democratic, socialist and secular democracy in India, it is necessary that all students, from the Primary to the University stages, should be imbued with the spirit of national unity, social cohesion and community service. Real national integration could be achieved only by building up a casteless, multi-religious and multi-lingual society based on equality of opportunity and social justice. From this standpoint, an atmosphere of equal respect for all religions, and social equality must be generated in all schools and colleges.

This would be feasible only if a common school system of public education is adopted as the national goal and implemented effectively both in cities and villages, during the next five years or so. As recommended by the Education

Commission, primary and secondary schools should be open to all children irrespective of caste, creed, community, religion, economic condition or social status. As a corollary, the existing Public schools and other private institutions, charging higher tuition fees and admitting students belonging predominantly to the richer classes, must now fall in line with the common school pattern, having uniform tuition fees and other charges.

Furthermore, institutions run by different castes, communities and religious denominations must now become a thing of the past; they should conform to the common system of public education in the larger interests of the country. Even at the collegiate and university stages, the words 'Hindu', 'Muslim', and 'Christian' should disappear from the names of educational institutions. Under a socialist and secular society, these names have become anachronisms and must go.

With a view to providing ample opportunities to students belonging to weaker segments of the population, a large number of merit scholarships ought to be available at all stages of education, especially to vulnerable sections. In sum, not a single child should be deprived of the highest available education in the country simply because his parents happen to be poor and cannot afford to send him to a school or college.

### Scope for New Experiments

While a common school system is desirable from the standpoint of social justice and national unity, the State Governments should give positive encouragement to educational institutions at various levels for conducting new experiments in teaching methods, examination system, combination of subjects in the curriculum, preparation of textbooks and training of teachers. Emphasis on uniformity need not hamper innovations and research in the educational sphere. Such experimental schools or colleges may

be allowed to gain experience in different directions without undue interference from the Education Departments. The concept of 'autonomous colleges' should now be given a definite shape. The State Boards of Education would, of course, issue regular certificates to successful candidates of these institutions on the recommendation of the Management. Panels of Experts should, however, assess the performance of such experimental institutions from time to time in the interests of maintaining efficiency and high standards.

### Community Service

Some form of social and national service ought to be made an integral part of education at all stages. This could be done by making provision for active student participation in programmes of community living in school or college campuses and in a variety of developmental schemes in the neighbourhood, relating to agriculture, industry, social welfare and building construction.

Within the educational campus, students could engage themselves in the cleaning of rooms and the premises, leveling the playground, maintaining a garden, polishing the furniture, whitewashing the walls and painting the doors and windows. Community living should be particularly emphasised in the Hostels where students could attend to their own needs, without engaging servants. Regular participation in developmental activities may include programmes of public sanitation, soil conservation, afforestation, minor irrigation projects, road construction and adult literacy.

Each school and college should draw up its own scheme of social service by maintaining a close liaison with Community Development Blocks, the concerned Departments of state Governments and various voluntary organizations. Such programmes of community service must be woven into the prescribed courses of study and ought not to be regarded mere-

ly as extra-curricular activities. Performance of students in such development projects should be properly assessed and accounted for in the examination system.

In addition, labour and social service camps may be organised each year during vacations in each district. Specific development projects should be selected in consultation with the district agencies. A part of funds required for these camps could be obtained from the local rural works programmes.

### Moral Education

As recommended by both Radhakrishnan and Kothari Commissions, organised attempts should be made for imparting moral and religious education in schools and colleges according to a graded and phased programme. For example, all educational institutions may start work with a few minutes of common or silent prayer and meditation. With a view to creating a healthy atmosphere for the unity of all religions, one or two periods in a week should be set aside in the time-table for such instruction. In the earlier stages, students may be acquainted with the lives of great religious leaders, their well-known writings and basic teachings which are common to all faiths. In the higher classes, a comparative study of different religions must be encouraged. This is indispensable for building up a multilingual, multi-racial and multi-religious society in India as also other developing countries of Asia and Africa.

Besides direct teaching in the class rooms, general atmosphere in our educational institutions, including the extra-curricular activities, should promote religious synthesis and integration. India today is faced with a crisis of character and the inculcation of ethical values in our youngmen and women is, doubtless, of crucial significance. This ought to be considered the responsibility of all the teachers, and not

merely of those who may be teaching various religious or ethical subjects.

### Examination Reform

As rightly emphasised by the U.G.C., if any single reform in University education is to be suggested, it should be that of examinations. This is true of the examination system at the primary and secondary stages as well. The current system has a crippling effect on the physical, mental and moral capacities of students and has resulted in the lowering of academic standards, weakening of discipline and the use of unfair and immoral means for securing certificates, diplomas and degrees.

It is, thus, essential to reform the examination system in a radical manner, without further delay. This subject has been examined in detail by various Committees and Commissions and a number of practical recommendations have been made from time to time. Some of these recommendations should now be implemented with a sense of emergency.

Briefly, the examination system should not only assess the intellectual attainments of students but also take into account their active participation in productive activities and in co-curricular programmes of games, sports, athletics, and social service, as also their quality of character.

### De-linking Degrees with Employment

At present, various Government Departments recruit candidates through the Public Service Commissions, mostly on the strength of their University Degrees. In consequence, there is a tendency among students to pass the examinations, through fair means or foul, for obtaining these degrees. Many years ago, the Union Government had appointed a Special Committee, under the chairmanship of Professor Humayun Kabir, to study this subject in detail. The Committee had recommended that, except for some all-India services like

the I.A.S., the Government Departments should prescribe their own courses of study and hold examinations for recruitment, without insisting on University degrees. Private employers could follow the same practice. These courses may also be introduced in the Higher Secondary Schools and even Colleges under the proposed scheme of 10+2+3.

De-linking of Government employment with Degrees would not only discourage undue rush for admissions to Universities and eliminate corrupt practices in examinations, but also enable the Government to secure better candidates for their departmental work. It would encourage several progressive educational institutions to introduce a variety of innovations in the academic sphere.

### Cooperation of Parents

It is absolutely essential that the parents of students, at all levels, should be actively involved in the crucial task of educational reconstruction in India. From the earliest stages, fathers and mothers must pay proper attention to the progress of their children, at home and in school, and there should be close coordination between the parents and teachers. For this purpose, parent-teacher associations ought to be a regular feature in our educational institutions. Such liaison between the two would make for higher educational standards and develop the personality of students in a much better way. The help of parents may also be sought by the heads of institutions in enforcing discipline and improving the general behaviour of the pupils. In fact, each home should be developed as a basic educational unit in real terms

### Involvement of Students

Above all, the cooperation of students *in schools and colleges* ought to be enlisted for reconstructing the *existing* educational system. Children born in Free India have *now* become adults and responsible citizens of the country. They

cherish new ambitions and aspirations and are anxious to settle down as useful and respectable citizens, without having to face unemployment and frustration. Their views, therefore, must be given due weight in overhauling the courses of study, preparation of text-books, participation in community service and development activities, examination reform, and improvement of teaching methods. They should be closely associated not only with the implementation of different student welfare programmes, but also with the decision-making processes in educational reforms. Student Unions could be utilised for enforcing self-discipline and creating a sense of greater responsibility in the younger generation. In Universities, a few representatives of students may be included in the Senate and even the Academic Council.

The youth should be made to understand that the present methods of violence and destruction of public property would do incalculable harm to the democratic fabric of the country. Violence inevitably provokes counter-violence and creates conditions of a virtual civil war which, in turn, promotes fascist tendencies in State administration. Dr. Arnold Toynbee, in his recent publication entitled 'Surviving the Future', tenders the following significant advice to the younger generation:

"Try to put yourself in the other people's place and to see why they hold these opinions or do these things with which you so strongly disagree. Go on opposing the conservative-minded members of your parents' generation. Certainly try to resist them and to defeat them insofar as their ideas and ideals seem to you to be mistaken, but do this in the Gandhi spirit; do it without hatred."

## CHAPTER IV

### A Drift to Disaster

After the dawn of Independence 28 years ago, we can be legitimately proud of a variety of achievements in different spheres of national planning. Despite many difficulties and hardships, including wars with China and Pakistan and natural calamities like droughts and floods, India has been marching ahead steadily over the decades. It would, therefore, be improper to sound a note of pessimism or despair in general terms. In truth, all of us must put our shoulders to the wheel so that the nation may progress and prosper.

#### Vinoba's Message

Even so, it must be conceded with frankness that our functioning in the educational sphere has been far from satisfactory. When a journalist asked Rishi Vinoba for a message on 15 August, 1947, he had observed: "to me, *Swaraj* signifies two essential symbols—a new flag and a new pattern of education; the flag has already changed, and I hope a new educational system will be ushered in very soon." We must, however, admit without hesitation that despite reports of committees and commissions, the old system of education continues to hold the field in a rather stagnant manner. In several respects, it has remained more or less



and threatens to imperil the very foundations of our democracy.

Ten years before the advent of freedom, I had the privilege of convening the first National Education Conference at Wardha in October 1937, over which Mahatma Gandhi himself presided. It was this Conference which gave birth to the scheme of Basic education under the stewardship of the late Dr. Zakir Husain. Although the Government of India and the State Governments accepted Basic education as the national pattern, it was never given a fair deal.

### Sevagram Conference

I, therefore, convened another National Education Conference at Sevagram in October 1972, which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. It was attended by almost all the Education Ministers of different States, a good number of Vice-Chancellors and many eminent educationists of the country. After detailed discussions for three days, the Conference issued a 'consensus' statement declaring that "education at all levels should be imparted through socially useful and productive activity, linked with economic growth and development, in both rural and urban areas."

It was also agreed that the course of study from the Primary to University levels should emphasise dignity of labour, spirit of nationalism and social responsibility and inculcation of ethical and moral values, stressing the essential unity of religions. The Conference recommended that University degrees should be delinked with employment in both public as well as private sectors. Furthermore, the examination system should be based on continuous assessment of not only the intellectual attainment of students but also their active participation in productive and development activities, community service, discipline and general demeanour.<sup>1</sup>

1. The detailed recommendations of the Sevagram Conference are given in the Appendix.

Three years have rolled by, but the Ministry of Education has not so far taken any initiative in asking the State Governments to implement these recommendations with a sense of emergency. Nonetheless, it is gratifying to note that the Planning Commission has included some of these basic ideas in the educational programme contained in the Draft Fifth Five Year Plan. Moreover, several State Governments, including Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh, have convened State-level Educational Conferences to discuss in depth the *Statement of the Sevagram Education Conference*. I am happy that these Governments have accepted the recommendations almost in toto, and it is hoped that their implementation will not lag behind.

### Need for Radical Reforms

It is admitted on all hands that the current educational system in India as well as in other developing countries has outlived its utility and must be refashioned in a radical manner. The UNESCO Commission on the Development of Education, in the course of their excellent report entitled 'Learning to be', have adopted the term 'Basic Education' for *primary and secondary stages and emphasised that "education must cease being confined within school house walls, and many forms of social and economic activity must be used for educational purposes."*

Dr. Gunnar Myrdal, recent recipient of the Nobel Prize, has expressed in unequivocal language that 'basic-oriented primary education could be the ideal solution for the reform of teaching methods in Indian schools.' Professor Castle of the United Kingdom, in his recent publication, 'Education for Self-help', has described Basic education as "one of the most interesting and promising developments in Indian education." Professor Paul Goodman calls the existing system as "compulsory mis-education" and asserts

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that the "schoolmonks, the administrators and professors have proliferated into a vested interest of the worst kind in human history".

Dr. Ivan Illich goes a step further and pleads for the establishment of a "de-schooling society" which will be free from the tyranny of academic walls. In brief, progressive educationalists the world over now recommend in unmistakable terms that education should be a continuous and life-long process, effectively linked with the physical and social environment of the child and providing ample opportunities for his active participation in creative and productive activities. This is the only practical way of augmenting production in agriculture and industry and making a dent on the problem of educated unemployment. Mere tinkering with this crucial issues would carry us nowhere.

### Growth of Numbers

During the last two decades, there has been a phenomenal growth of numbers at the primary, secondary and University levels. But the quality of education has been going down precipitously. Constitutional directive to make primary education free and compulsory has remained unfulfilled all these years. But any attempt to implement this directive during the Fifth and the Sixth Five Year Plans, without sincere efforts to upgrade the quality of elementary education on the basic pattern, would be an exercise in utter futility. In fact, such an effort would make matters still worse and there would be a heavy flood of not only unemployed but unemployable youngmen who would engulf the whole country into unprecedented catastrophe.

Besides the 'bookish' nature of our educational system, corruption of various sorts has eaten into its very vitals, infecting teachers as well as students. Unscrupulous managers have turned their schools and colleges into veritable 'business shops' which get exemption from taxes into the

bargain. It is very rare that the teachers actually get what they sign and, in turn, they exploit their students without pricks of conscience. Even in a State like Gujarat, where I functioned as the Chancellor of various Universities for five years, several professors guaranteed first divisions to their favourites on payment of silver.

So far as the students are concerned, mass copying has become almost their birth-right, and any resistance on the part of invigilators is threatened with dire consequences. And what is worse, wine has also entered into the academic world without shame or secrecy. This is, indeed, a tale too deep for tears. Citadels of learning have become dens of corruption. Gandhiji had designated teachers as the 'conscience' and the youth as the 'salt' of the nation. But, if the salt itself loses its flavour, all hopes for the survival of a nation are, obviously, dashed to the ground.

### Politics in Education

To cap it all, during recent times there has been a tremendous pollution of politics in the educational atmosphere. Different political parties have systematically infiltrated into educational institutions, more specially at the collegiate and University levels. In consequence, several Universities in the country have become cockpits of party rivalries and, in the process, ruined themselves beyond repair. Recent elections to the Delhi University Students' Union, in which the Congress and the Jan Sangh vied with each other and poured lakhs of rupees for capturing power, have been commented upon very adversely in the intellectual circles.

The Banaras Hindu University has also been shaken almost to the foundations due to politicalisation. Fortunately, firm handling of the situation by the authorities has given at least some respite to that premier University founded by the great national leader, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.

Many years ago, when, as the General Secretary of the

Congress, I looked after the working of the Youth Congress in various States, I had made it a rule that no Youth Congress worker would seek any ticket for the State Legislature or the Parliament without putting in at least five years of hard work for instilling amongst youngmen the ideals of democracy and socialism.

I had also instructed the Provincial Congress Committees not to use Youth Congress workers for their party elections. This had a salutary effect and a good number of able students joined the Youth Congress from a broad national standpoint, without indulging in narrow-party politics within the portals of the Universities. Gradually, the rot has set in and the Congress and other parties have been trying to 'capture' the Students' Unions of various colleges and Universities without any scruples.

Even during pre-Independence days, Mahatma Gandhi was of the definite view that youngmen, so long as they are students, should be 'searchers, and not politicians'. They should, doubtless, evince a living interest in national and international politics in a general way. The ideologies of various parties should be studied carefully by the students; they should also keep abreast of political events on the international chessboard with a view to studying their effects on national affairs. But the teachers and students should in no case get involved in sordid party politics and the academic atmosphere of educational institutions should not be allowed to be polluted and corrupted by politicians.

In my own case, I did not use the teaching staff and students of my colleges in Wardha when I stood for the Parliamentary election in 1952. Shortly afterwards, when Pandit Nehru asked me to become the General Secretary of the Congress, I resigned the Principalship and devoted full time to the AICC work. Even now, as Chairman of the Shiksha Mandal which runs several colleges in Wardha, Nagpur and

Jabalpur, I see to it that party politics is kept out of the precincts of these institutions almost religiously.

### **'Acharya Kul'**

I have not a shadow of doubt that political pollution of our educational institutions, if not checked with a firm hand, would spell disaster and disintegrate the very roots of our democratic structure. Vinoba has recently initiated a new movement called '**Acharya Kul**' which could be joined by only those teachers, writers and intellectuals who are not members of any political party and who desire to build up a brotherhood of the teaching profession purely on national lines.

The Acharya Kul is intended to study subjects of national and international importance objectively and impartially and publish the 'consensus' for the benefit of the general public from time to time. This movement is gradually gaining strength in the country and deserves full support at the hands of teachers from the Primary to the University levels. In the absence of such a healthy and constructive movement, the present drift to politics in the educational institutions would continue unabated and ultimately lead to a disaster of unimaginable proportions. I fervently hope and pray that this will not be allowed to happen. All the political parties should soon try to evolve among themselves a Code of Conduct under which educational bodies would not be drawn into the whirlpool of politics for their selfish ends, and our schools, colleges and Universities will be permitted to function as lighthouses of community service and national reconstruction.

### **Drift to Disaster**

Let me conclude by saying that I have deep faith and confidence in the youth of free India. Given the necessary guidance and motivation, they are sure to rise to the high-



est peaks of success in various spheres. During the last few decades, they have already registered remarkable achievements in technical education, mountaineering, sports, arts and science. I am convinced that our youngmen are second to none in this wide world; with proper training and encouragement, they could break all records without much difficulty. But, if the politicians and the academic 'monks' go on corrupting them at the very roots, they would inevitably collapse like a house of cards and push the country down the precipice.

A policy of drift in domestic, national and international affairs never pays dividends; instead of solving difficulties it tends to complicate them still further. At any rate, the present drift in the educational domain must end forthwith. Otherwise, it would prove to be a drift to disaster.

## CHAPTER V

### Relevance of Gandhian Thought

I am convinced that Gandhiji's approach to various problems was very scientific, rational and practical; it was not dogmatic and Utopian as is often imagined by the so-called intellectuals in India and abroad. Gandhiji did adhere to certain eternal truths firmly and without compromise. For example, he was of the definite view that noble objectives could be achieved only through pure and truthful means. He was 'a practical idealist' and endeavoured to find realistic solutions of different problems facing the country in the light of his rich and varied experience. I have, therefore, no manner of doubt that Gandhian thought is basically sound and relevant to our times. I would go a step further and state without any hesitation that instead of being medieval and out-of-date, Bapu's ideas are even ahead of the times, and economic and political compulsions would inevitably force us to revert to them for resolving some of the paradoxes that intrigue us today.

It is significant that the international Seminar on Gandhian Thought held in New Delhi from January 30 to February 5, 1970 generally agreed that "Gandhian thought has significant relevance for the modern world and that many things which have happened since he passed away have not

diminished but heightened its relevance." The 'message', issued by the Seminar at the end of its deliberations, added:

"The crisis that Gandhi faced is obviously not over but has been deepening, and the solutions that he proposed have not become out-dated. . . . Gandhi is still a living challenge to the economic thinking, planning and action not only in his own country but in all the countries of the world".

### 'Craze' for Machinery

It is often thought that Mahatma Gandhi was essentially a religious ascetic and, consequently, averse to the fruits of modern science and technology. This is, surely, based on an unfortunate misconception. Gandhiji had repeatedly emphasized that he was not against machinery as such; he was only opposed to the 'craze' for labour-saving devices which plunged millions of people into the abyss of enforced idleness. While preparing the draft of the 'Gandhian Plan' which was published by me with Gandhiji's own Foreword in 1944, I one day requested the Mahatma to concretise his ideas about the use of the machine. He declared:

"I entertain no fads in this regard. All that I desire is that every able-bodied citizen of India should be provided with gainful employment. If electricity or even atomic energy could be used without displacing human labour and creating unemployment, I will not raise my little finger against it. I am, however, still to be convinced that this would be possible in a country like India where capital is scarce and labour abundant".

Gandhiji added:

"If the Government could provide full employment to our people without the help of Khadi and Village industries, I shall be prepared to wind up my constructive programme in this sphere".

Discussing this problem with the Members of the Planning Commission at the time of the formulation of the First Five Year Plan, Acharya Vinoba went a step further:

"If the Government can find other avenues of employment for all those who ask for work, I shall have no hesitation in burning my wooden Charkha to cook one day's meal, without shedding a single tear".

I do not think any modern economist could find fault with this clear enunciation of Gandhian views regarding mechanization in developing countries like India.

In his important publication entitled '*The Asian Drama: An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations*', Professor Gunnar Myrdal has broadly supported Gandhiji's emphasis on village and cottage industries because "South-Asian countries now run the risk of creating petty islands of highly organised Western-type industries that will remain surrounded by a sea of stagnation". The learned Professor observes:

"The development of industries in direct competition with existing cottage industries would take work and bread away from millions with no immediate alternative source of employment or income. This would not be rational from a planning point of view. . . . As for the workers in South-Asian cottage industry, there is no prospect of any large-scale adjustment for decades to come, particularly as the labour force will increase rapidly until the end of the century"

### Employment

While giving a final shape to the Third Five Year Plan, the Planning Commission tried its very best to provide pro-

diminished but heightened its relevance." The 'message', issued by the Seminar at the end of its deliberations, added:

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goal for the American nation. Progressive economic thinking in the United Kingdom is also feeling worried about the highly centralized society where instead of more equitable distribution through the soaking of the rich, there are visible signs of 'soaking the poor' through expensive technological advances and higher rates of indirect taxation which always hurt the poor sections much more disproportionately.'

(Professor Galbraith has raised his voice against the birth of a few giant business corporations in the world which tend to reduce the State to a subservient position and bind the Establishment to a "techno-structure consisting of specialists, planners and technicians." "The major corporations", remarked the Professor, "were concerned not with consumers' well-being but their own—their security, growth, convenience, prestige, technological virtuosity and profits". In order to avoid the perils of such an industrial system, Dr. Galbraith recommends the strong assertion of 'other goals' so that the new industrial State would become "responsive to the larger purposes of the society". These goals would, doubtless, be essentially moral and human in line with Gandhian ideas and programmes.

### Simple Life

Mahatma Gandhi stood for a simple and, more or less, self-sufficient living in the rural surroundings, mainly because he could foresee that a highly sophisticated and centralized life in the cities would inescapably lead to the organization of inhuman violence and aggressive nationalism resulting in international tensions. He, therefore, advocated the establishment of ideal villages in India where the people

2. *New Statesmen*, London, Dec. 5, 1969.

3. *The Indian Express*, Ahmedabad, Jan. 1, 1970.

4. *The New Industrial State* (1967), by Professor J.K. Galbraith, p. 390.

ductive employment at least to all those persons who would be added to the labour force during the Plan period, without daring to liquidate the back-log of unemployed numbers during the previous plans. Ambitious programmes were formulated for nation-wide rural works including minor irrigation, soil reclamation and conservation, afforestation, village feeder roads, etc. Rural housing was also allotted a fairly high priority. Even so, we discovered that over five million persons would still remain without gainful jobs. Members of the Planning Commission, several of whom did not see eye to eye with Gandhiji, were, therefore, obliged to concede that there was no alternative but to go in for a bold national programme of village and cottage industries in the country-side. The Khadi and Village Industries Commission was given the assurance that whatever was organizationally feasible would be made financially possible. Such a categorical assurance had not been extended by the Planning Commission to any other sector or project. It had to be recognized that the Mahatma's ideas instead of being outworn and impractical were very much relevant to the challenges of modern times. Even while the draft is being finalized for the Fifth Five Year Plan, the spectre of unemployment and under-employment continues to stare us in the face. It is indisputable that even at this stage a proper dent can be made on this vexed problem only through spreading a network of village, cottage and small industries throughout the country and, especially, in the rural areas.

It is significant that during a recent Gallup poll in the United States of America, 78 per cent of the people opted for a policy of providing guaranteed work, while only a minority of 36 per cent favoured a guaranteed annual income for the poor. This is mainly because the Americans are now becoming increasingly conscious of 'the de-humanizing aspects of a technological society.' They look forward to the growth of 'a sense of community' as a worthwhile

operation where each is equal to the other.” It was for such a Co-operative Commonwealth of nations that Gandhiji worked ceaselessly throughout his life. He did not believe in the efficacy of the atom bomb; instead, he pleaded for the evolution of the Atmik or soul force and regarded the world as his own family, irrespective of any distinctions of race, language or religion. As pointed out by Dr. Arnold Toynbee, the Mahatma “taught mankind a moral lesson in the field of politics, and this on the eve of the opening of the Atomic Age.”

Gandhiji's ideas regarding village self-sufficiency and world brotherhood may appear somewhat anomalous and paradoxical. When I requested him one day in Sevagram to clarify this apparent contradiction, Gandhiji put in: “I need not rush to the ends of the earth for satisfying my primary wants of food, clothing and shelter. While living a simple and peaceful life in Sevagram village, I aspire not only to identify myself with humanity, but even to be in tune with the infinite”.

### Concept of Socialism

It is sometimes alleged that under the guise of ‘trusteeship’ Gandhiji was inclined to give a new lease of life to the capitalist system. This again is an entirely erroneous notion. Gandhiji had made it abundantly clear times without number that he only wanted to give one more chance to the capitalists to reform themselves through voluntary effort. In case they failed to do so, it was always open to a democratic State to enact the necessary legislation for restricting their profits and regulating the wages and prices of goods. The final draft which was approved by Gandhiji during his

6. *Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. VI, p. 349.

7. *Mahatma Gandhi: Hundred Years*, (Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi), 1968, p. 377.



could pursue the ideal of 'plain living and high thinking'. While Bapu admired modern science, he wanted it to be "re-clothed and re-fashioned aright."<sup>5</sup> One would naturally be surprised to know that the Defence Budget of the United States in 1970 was of the order of 79,800 million dollars, followed by the Soviet Union's expenditure on armaments amounting to 40,000 million. In terms of the percentage of Gross National Product spent on armaments, the Soviet Union, however, tops the list with 15.2%, followed by America spending 9.3% of its G.N.P. on defence. The total expenditure on armaments in the world, excluding the unknown figure of defence expenditure in China, aggregates to 165,000 million dollars. If this fabulous amount was drastically scaled down and spent instead on raising the living standards of millions of half-famished and half-clothed people in the developing countries, the current gaping gap between the rich and the poor nations could be bridged in a concrete manner, and the chances of a third World War averted with a measure of confidence. Thus, Gandhiji's concept of non-violence is not a fad or a dogma; it is the only sensible way of life which could make the world a better place to live in.

### Decentralization

Decentralization of economic and political power is a natural corollary to non-violence. To Gandhiji, economic exploitation was the essence of violence in society and wars in future could be eschewed only by following a bold policy of decentralization through the organization of largely self-sufficient village communities. "Self-sufficiency," stated Gandhiji, "does not mean narrowness". "Man is as much self-dependent as inter-dependent, when dependence becomes necessary in order to keep society in good order, it is no longer dependence, but becomes co-

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5. Mahatma Gandhi: *The Last Phase*, Vol. II, by Pyarelal, p. 515.

"If Communism came without any violence, it would be welcome". Gandhiji was once asked: "But Indian Communists want in India Communism of the Stalin type and want to use your name for their purpose". He firmly replied: "They won't succeed." In India today Socialism is being confused with Communism and all kinds of motives are being attributed to each other by the national leaders. It would, therefore, be worth our while recapitulating Gandhiji's clear-cut ideas on the subject and avoid the obvious pitfalls. India must pursue the path of Socialism only through non-violent and democratic methods. Recourse to class-war and mutual hatred would prove to be suicidal.

### Pollution of Air and Water

Further, as a result of the mad race after industrialization, and urbanization, the world is faced today with the serious menace of the pollution of air and water. President Nixon had waged a relentless war against this grave danger and launched a campaign for "clean air, clean water and open spaces". He declared:

"We no longer can afford to consider air and water common property, free to be abused by anyone without regard to the consequences... The argument is increasingly heard that a fundamental contradiction has arisen between economic growth and the quality of life, so that to have one we must forsake the other. The answer is not to abandon growth, but to redirect it".<sup>9</sup>

Dr. Lamont Cole, Professor of Ecology at Cornell University, U.S.A., remarks that the fundamental problem of pollution is 'our fetish for equating growth with progress':

"Economists state that companies must grow to survive. We take pride in a gross national product grow-

9. *State of the Union Message*, 1970.

detention at the Aga Khan Palace in 1932 states in explicit terms that the doctrine of Trusteeship "does not recognize any right of private ownership of property except so far as it may be permitted by society for its own welfare". "It does not exclude legislative regulation of the ownership and the use of wealth". It is also explained without ambiguity that "under the Gandhian economic order, the character of production will be determined by social necessity and not by personal whim or greed".<sup>8</sup> I am of the definite view that Gandhiji's concept of Trusteeship, instead of being vague and reactionary, was more radical than the current theories of Socialism. Some attempts have been made in India and elsewhere to give a concrete shape to Gandhiji's views on Trusteeship in modern business and industry. I have little doubt that Bapu's ideas, if translated into action, would not only provide to the world a better type of Socialism but also avoid considerable recrimination and blood-shed.

Gandhiji wanted every individual to begin Socialism with himself and not resort to forcible possession of other's property. "The first step in the practice of Socialism", declared he, "is to learn to use your hands and feet, to fold your bedding on getting up in the morning, wash your own clothes, help your mothers and sisters in cleaning the utensils and spin daily to provide yourself with the cloth you need". He added: "If they practise Socialism in this way, instead of talking or preaching to others, they would create a Socialist society in their immediate neighbourhood, with themselves as the first converts".

### Socialism vs. Communism

Mahatma Gandhi was stoutly opposed to the Communist methods of violence and class-war. "Communism of the Russian type," said he, "would be repugnant to India".

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8. *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase*, Vol. II, pp. 633-34.

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ing at between four and five per cent per year, and we try to ignore the fact that our per capita production of trash is growing at about the same rate. We are told that our electrical generating capacity must increase by ten per cent per year, but we forget that all of that energy must eventually be imposed on the environment as heat. . . . If the bills for pollution were handed back to the sources of pollution, we might see some surprising improvements in the quality of our air. But such a system of social accounting, I hasten to point out, involves political and ethical decisions rather than purely technological ones."<sup>10</sup>

In the United Kingdom as well, the Government has recently appointed a Standing Commission for preventing the pollution of air and water by all possible means, including the regulation of the discharge of effluents and the foul vapours generated by automobiles. A British bi-monthly has written extensively on "The Politics of Pollution" in one of its recent issues and has mentioned ironically that modern science and technology which was supposed to contain satisfactory answers to all the problems has landed society in a very difficult and awkward situation.

It is sometimes thought that the situation might be better in Russia. But this is a delusion. Says the London Economist:

"Because the Soviet Union is not a capitalist country it is often thought that there must be less pollution there. Pollution in the West is usually blamed on an economic system which takes no account of the cost of pollution to society in general. Yet seems that the Soviet Union is as bad as we are."<sup>11</sup>

10. *The American Review*, July 1970.

11. *The Economist*, London, 5-11 September 1970.

It is high time the Government of India also took special steps to prevent the pollution of air and water in the growing cities with a sense of urgency.

### **'Wealth never Satiates Man'**

Our ancient Rishis and sages were never tired of repeating that "wealth by itself could never satiate man". Gandhiji upheld his ideal of simplicity all the time. He was averse to all those economic and political activities which were devoid of moral and religious values. It is in this connection that I was particularly touched by the following observations of Svetlana, the daughter of Stalin, in her recent publication:

"All the great religions of the earth have a high moral teaching in common. All such religions demand that man should not kill; should not steal; should do good; that he should not harm others if he does not want them to harm him. Nor should he strive after glory and riches, for they are temporal. Spirit alone is eternal. The melody of a religious feeling is the music of life itself."<sup>12</sup>

And she adds :

"To me the best church of all is the sky's starry dome above."

These are the shapes of things to come, and Gandhiji's sublime vision gives us a rare insight into the future of mankind !

Gandhiji belongs to the future, and not the past. He is not dead; his message is eternal and shall live as long as the sun shines in the vast open skies.

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12. *Only One Year*, by Svetlana Alliluyeva (Hutchinson, London)

ing at between four and five per cent per year, and we try to ignore the fact that our per capita production of trash is growing at about the same rate. We are told that our electrical generating capacity must increase by ten per cent per year, but we forget that all of that energy must eventually be imposed on the environment as heat. . . . If the bills for pollution were handed back to the sources of pollution, we might see some surprising improvements in the quality of our air. But such a system of social accounting, I hasten to point out, involves political and ethical decisions rather than purely technological ones."<sup>10</sup>

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## CHAPTER VI

### Ends and Means

Mahatma Gandhi had repeatedly told us that the means used for achieving various ends should be as pure as the objectives themselves. He emphatically observed: "There is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree." The Mahatma never subscribed to the principle that the ends justified the means. Even during India's struggle for freedom, he had once remarked: "I am prepared to sacrifice everything for the liberation of my country, but not Truth and Non-violence."

In my view, the greatest tragedy that has been witnessed during present years is this dilution of emphasis on the purity of means in our national life. It is true that we are today faced with very difficult problems of inflation, poverty, unemployment, corruption and an outdated educational system. Even so, the tendency on the part of individuals, groups and political parties to use false, unscrupulous and hypocritical methods for the achievement of their narrow and selfish goals is most disquieting. Black money in phenomenal proportions is being collected and distributed during the elections for winning votes; violence, loot and arson are being employed for intensifying political agita-

tion; coercive techniques like 'gheraos' are used even in Sarvodaya campaigns. Corruption is rampant in almost all walks of life.

### Practical Wisdom

It is sometimes thought that Gandhiji's stress on the purity of means was 'high philosophy'. To my mind, it is practical wisdom. Impure methods may appear to succeed for the time being; but it is as sure as the night following the day that such wrong means would inescapably lead to failure and even disaster. The Watergate Scandal is a classical example of this inexorable law of human life. The former American President, Mr. Richard Nixon, indulged in brazen falsehoods and tried to cover one lie with a hundred more lies. At last, he had to quit in utter disgrace. The new President, Mr. Gerald Ford, in his inaugural Address significantly declared: "I believe that truth is the glue that holds Government together, not only our Government but civilization itself. In all my public and private acts as your President I expect to follow my instincts of openness and candour with full confidence that honesty is always the best policy in the end."

### 'Watergates' in India

In our own country, there have been several 'Watergates' which have remained unearthed. Perhaps, some of our young and fearless journalists, supported by an independent judiciary, would be able to uncover them in future. A change in the Company Law to the effect that business houses could not make open donations to political parties has served as a floodgate for the flow of black money and the resultant corruption from top to bottom. Encouraging casteism, communalism and religious bigotry for mobilising the votes of ignorant masses has really been a shameful spectacle in our elections. Besides various other

has ceased to be a matter of virtue and pride, although 'Satyameva Jayate' continues to be our national motto.

I have no iota of doubt that India and the world would suffer very greatly by ignoring Gandhiji's warning that unclean methods must never be employed for trying to attain so-called high aims. It is sometimes thought that such wrong means yield bad results in the other world, after death. I am, however, convinced that those crude ways bring about hapless consequences in this life itself. Let me cite here the instance of Bangladesh. The former Pakistan President, Yahya Khan, perpetrated untold sufferings on millions of poor people in that region for suppressing their political aspirations. Ultimately, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman triumphed and Yahya Khan found his proper place behind the prison bars.

### In Communist Countries

Experience in Communist countries, including the Soviet Union, has been no different. Sowing winds has invariably led to the reaping of whirlwinds. The exiled Nobel Laureate of Russia, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, has warned his countrymen against violence and war, specially against China, and that too for a 'dead ideology'. He maintains that even an 'authoritarian order' should 'possess a strong moral foundation', and adds: "Once this moral principle is perverted and weakened, the authoritarian order, in spite of the external successes of the State, would gradually decline and perish."

### An Appeal to Youth

I should like to address a special appeal to the youth of India. All of us appreciate their grievances and difficulties and recognise that the current educational structure inflicts on them untold frustration. The ambition of our young men to build up a better socio-economic order is,

surely, praiseworthy. But in their over-anxiety to fulfil their mission, the youth must not take recourse to violent and destructive agitations which, doubtless, lead to calamitous consequences. Let them always heed Mahatma Gandhi's advice that two wrongs never make a right. I would also quote for their benefit the following observations of the greatest historian, Dr. Arnold Toynbee, from a recent publication:

"Violence inevitably provokes a 'backlash'. If you young people resort to violence, then the people in power will use counter-violence, and they are likely to be better armed and better organised than you can be. Then, there may be civil war, and the forces of reaction are likely to be victors, and in the end we shall have a fascist world State. So, above all, try to be patient and avoid violence. Take your lessons from the leaders of great philosophies and religions. Try to copy the gentleness, the patience and the long suffering of the Buddha and the Jesus and of other great souls such as Gandhi, who have appeared amongst us in our own time."

## CHAPTER VII

### What is Indian Socialism ?

Socialism has been interpreted by various thinkers and political groups in diverse ways. As Professor Joad remarks, "Socialism is like a hat that has lost its shape because everybody wears it." Since India is committed to a socialist order, it would be worth our while having a precise notion of what Indian socialism really connotes in concrete terms. Any ideological confusion at this stage may fritter away our energies in unnecessary controversies.

Socialism in India is not merely the aim of some political parties; in December 1954, Parliament also unanimously adopted the 'socialist pattern of society' as the objective of our social and economic policy. This ideal is enshrined in the Preamble of the Indian Constitution as well; it secures to all its citizens "Justice, social, economic and political; Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; Equality of status and of opportunity; and promotion of Fraternity, assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the Nation."

The Directive Principles too ask the State to ensure adequate means of livelihood to all its citizens, to distribute the ownership and control of the material resources of the community so as to subserve the common good, and to see that

'the operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment'. Our Five Year Plans have been formulated on the foundations of these very principles which must necessarily guide us in the coming decades.

The actual word 'Socialism' was first used by Robert Owen of England in the Cooperative Magazine, 1827; it also figured in a journal edited by the followers of Saint-Simon in France, a few years later. This term was, in truth, employed to express opposition to the individualist approach of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. Later, it was used by several other authors in England and Europe to indicate the concept of 'fellowship of man' based on the welfare of both the individual and the society by eliminating the exploitation of man by man.

In the Western countries, this objective is now particularly known as 'democratic socialism'. In Fascist Italy and Germany, the word was misused for 'national socialism' (Nazism) and the 'Corporate State'. In the communist countries, 'socialism' signifies one-party rule through the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' including public ownership of all means of production and distribution. The State, instead of 'withering away', grows into a monolithic and highly centralized machine, reducing individuals to its cogs and spare parts.

### Socialism is not Communism

Since India is the largest democracy in the world and is wedded to the ideals of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity, it should be clearly understood that Indian Socialism is not Communism; it firmly believes in the establishment of a socialist democracy through peaceful and non-violent means. In place of class war, Socialism in India has to be achieved through the process of discussion, persuasion, cooperation and public education. Instead of

wholesale nationalisation of all economic activities, only those 'key' sectors should be publicly owned and managed which would promote social good, without smothering individual freedom and letting loose a reign of terror and bureaucratic regimentation. Mahatma Gandhi had always laid the greatest stress on the purity of the means for the achievement of noble ends.

### **Not Laissez-faire Either**

On the other hand, Socialism under Indian planning cannot give any quarter to the out-dated notions of 'private profit' and *laissez-faire*. It is high time private entrepreneurs read the signs of the times and learned to run their industrial establishments in the spirit of public service and national welfare. Otherwise, the State will be obliged to step in for protecting the consumers and preventing economic exploitation of the community in general.

India must, therefore, evolve 'a golden mean' between free enterprise and totalitarian socialism through planned economic development within the democratic framework. This system is often described as a 'mixed economy'; I prefer to call it a 'middle' or Sarvodaya economy which should ensure the 'welfare of all' through a non-exploitative and decentralized organisation. In a sense, the Gandhian ideal of 'trusteeship', based on non-violence and innate faith in the goodness of human nature, should inform all our activities under democratic socialism. Equality and Social Justice must be achieved by the State at a fast pace, but not at the cost of Liberty and Fraternity.

This may appear to be a slow and long process, but, I have little doubt that, ultimately, it would prove to be the quickest and the shortest.

### **Full Employment**

The very first aim of Indian Socialism must inevitably

be full employment of the human and material resources. In a developing country like India, the best form of social insurance is productive employment with a living wage adequate enough to fulfil the minimum needs of food, clothing and housing. Under-developed nations can ill-afford to give 'doles' without work. However, a nation-wide programme of family planning is absolutely necessary for preventing a population explosion.

### Maximum Production

The second goal of socialism should be maximum production. Full employment without augmenting agricultural and industrial production would not raise the living standards of people to any appreciable extent, and higher production at the cost of full employment would result in greater inequalities and human distress. Both these objectives should, therefore, go hand in hand under a socialist pattern of society. To this end, a country like ours, with abundant labour and scarce capital, must necessarily employ comparatively more labour-intensive techniques of production. Dr. Schumacher has been strongly pleading for the evolution of a 'middle' or 'intermediate' technology in the developing countries of Asia and Africa. Here again, Gandhiji's insistence on small-scale, village and cottage industries assumes special relevance.

### Need for Stability

With a view to stepping up production, it is imperative that an air of uncertainty should not be allowed to hang over the heads of producers in fields as well as factories. For example, land reforms are very desirable both for social justice and higher productivity. But we should not go on tinkering with the rights of landholders all the time. Agrarian legislation should be implemented expeditiously and thoroughly. Having done that, the farmers should be assured



that there would be no further revision of ceilings and other land laws for the next 15 years or so. Similarly, too frequent talk about the nationalisation of private sector industries generates a climate of uncertainty in the minds of entrepreneurs, and further investments tend to taper off almost to a zero point. This, admittedly, hampers production and leads to economic stagnation. A ceiling on urban property is, doubtless, a socialist measure; but a practical scheme for proper implementation has to be worked out.

### **Private and Public Sectors**

Under a socialist economy, both the public and private sectors should be allowed to function properly as integral parts of the National sector, within the prescribed rules and regulations, without undue interference by the State. In my view, the Industrial Policy Resolution, 1956, is a sound and balanced document and need not be revised at least during the Fifth Five Plan period. It should, however, be made clear that the State has every intention of establishing new and modern consumer industries in cotton textiles, jute, cement, sugar and oil.

The private sector should fully recognise its social responsibilities and must not indulge in known malpractices for exploiting the consumers and the working classes. Public accountability ought to be treated as a normal duty and manipulation of accounts for tax evasion and avoidance should become a thing of the past. The public sector too will have to register tangible improvement of efficiency as also profitability. While new and young entrepreneurs should be given preference in granting licences for additional industries, established business houses need not be completely debarred from expanding their activities to step up production. Though concentration of economic power must be curbed and regulated, the goal of higher production should never be allowed to recede in the background.

To me, the current controversy regarding the 'joint sector' appears to be rather unnecessary. In fact, the private sector ought to welcome the equity participation of the State in industrial establishments of various types, provided there is no undue interference leading to delays and inefficiency. The public sector enterprises also should throw open a percentage of their share capital to the general public. This would make these units really 'public', involve the people in their working and mobilise private financial resources for State undertakings.

In order to prevent a few moneyed people from cornering the shares, no single individual or party may be allowed to purchase more than a specified number of shares of these public ventures. In this manner, both private as well as public enterprises in India could be of a mixed pattern, sharing each other's talent and expertise, but not diluting their distinctive responsibilities. Further, Public sector industries should evolve a 'joint sector' by inviting State Governments to participate in their equity capital and share responsibility in management.

### **Equitable Distribution**

The third aim of a 'socialist order' should be equitable distribution and social justice in all spheres of economic activity. The tax structure ought to promote those goals in a thorough manner. While labour must be given its due share in profits, wages must be linked with productivity. Otherwise, demands for higher bonus and wages, without proportionate increase in production, would generate inflationary spiral, and wages and prices would continue to chase each other endlessly.

The interests of the consumer should also be safeguarded through a network of co-operative stores and fair price shops in both cities and villages. This could best be done by building up sizable buffer stocks of consumer goods like

foodgrains, sugar, edible oil and cloth. These stocks should be augmented when the prices tend to sag below remunerative levels, and unloaded on the market when the price-level shows an upward trend beyond the purchasing capacity of the consumer.

The State need not take upon itself unduly heavy responsibilities in this sphere, as such a course would invariably lead to proliferation of bureaucracy with all the attendant evils. It is, however, essential that the size of the buffer stocks is large enough to influence the market in a perceptible manner, from a position of strength. A strong consumer movement should be organised in a big way. For a Government to attempt purchasing directly from all the primary producers and to shoulder the responsibility of feeding and clothing every consumer would, surely, be a meaningless exercise.

These three fundamental aims of Indian socialism could be fulfilled successfully only if we build up an infra-structure of public institutions like the Panchayats, cooperatives and schools as the grassroots of democracy throughout the country. As Professor Gunnar Myrdal points out in his "Beyond the Welfare State", developing countries have to 'build up the organs of self-government, collective cooperation and bargaining' with great care and attention. Democratic socialism cannot flourish properly under a system of ever-expanding bureaucracy in all directions. It is the sacred duty of these non-government public agencies to enforce self-discipline and integrity in production as well as distribution. This will be possible of achievement only if the Panchayats function in a non-partisan manner, and broad-based cooperatives are freed from the pollution of party-politics.

Additionally, education at all levels should be effectively linked with developmental activities and ensure social justice and equality of opportunity. Improvement in the quality of Panchayats, cooperative societies and educational

institutions would evidently require a host of trained and dedicated persons, working with a sense of mission in the service of the nation. The official machinery must be geared to the primary task of achieving speedy development and securing social and economic justice. Further, the Chambers of Commerce and Industry and other private sector institutions ought not to hesitate in imposing discipline and fair trade practices on their members.

### Theory of 'Percolation'

Experience of economic planning over the years in India and elsewhere has conclusively falsified the theory of 'percolation', that with a rise of the Gross National Product the living standards of the poorest sections also improve as a matter of course. In developed countries like the USA and UK, the rich have become richer and the poor poorer, even though there has been a substantial increase in their national incomes. Planners have thus been driven to the conclusion that the economic condition of the weaker segments could register visible improvement only if a direct attack is made on their pressing problems of malnutrition, scanty clothing and poor housing.

In a 'socialist democracy, it is, therefore, urgent that the State formulates specific schemes for the supply of food articles, standard cloth and housing materials at reasonable rates to the vulnerable sections through a well-organised public distribution system. Now that India is trying to achieve self-sufficiency in foodgrains and has built up fairly adequate buffer-stocks of rice and wheat, there should not be much difficulty in stabilising the prices of foodgrains through a chain of fair price shops in urban as well as rural areas.

Textile Mills, including the public sector units, should be able to supply coarse and medium varieties of cloth to the underprivileged sections through the fair price shops.

there has been noticeable progress in the construction of houses for middle and low income groups, the fact remains that the backward classes are still without adequate housing facilities. Hence, the State must undertake a bold programme of small and cheap houses, costing, say, Rs. 2,000 each, for the lowest income groups in towns and the countryside.

### Schemes for Weaker Sections

Special facilities for technical education should be provided to the children of the weaker sections with a view to making them self-reliant and respectful citizens. Drinking water facilities in the rural areas must be made available to the people without further loss of time. A chain of multi-purpose cooperative societies should be set up for bettering the economic condition of the under-privileged classes, including landless labour, Harijans and Adivasis. This would be the only effective way of pulling out the roots of poverty and eliminating their exploitation by the powerful groups. It is, however, obvious that these cooperative institutions must be manned by constructive workers of unimpeachable integrity and earnestness. In addition, cheap legal aid has to be provided to the poorer sections by the administration.

It must also be recognised beyond a shadow of doubt that the existence of social cohesion among the mass of people is of crucial importance for the establishment of democratic socialism in developing countries. From this standpoint, the prevalence of untouchability and other social evils is a veritable drag on our economic progress and should be eradicated with a sense of emergency. Prohibition too should be treated as an integral part of the socialistic programme in India. Otherwise, the removal of poverty would remain, more or less, a pious hope.

Various schemes could be adequately financed under the Five Year Plans only if domestic resources were tapped to

the full in an equitable manner and all items of non-essential and unproductive expenditure were slashed to the bone. Maximum economy should be effected in the construction programmes of the Union and State Governments, and highest priority must be accorded to quick-maturing and productive schemes under agriculture and industry. Additional wages should be paid either in the form of consumer goods or small savings certificates, including deposits in the Provident Fund accounts,—and not in cash as is being done today.

Production of luxury articles for conspicuous consumption should be curbed with a firm hand, and consumer goods needed by the common man should be available in sufficient quantities and at cheaper rates. As has already been mentioned in the Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956, the State has every right to enter these spheres of production, without offering any apologies.

Foreign aid without political strings would, of course, be welcome; but maximum reliance has to be placed on internal resources in the form of taxes, public borrowings, small savings and voluntary contribution in cash, kind and labour.

India is the first country in the world which has launched a bold programme of comprehensive economic planning under a democratic structure. So, it is essential that we chalk out our own path through new experiments and even unorthodox innovations. Experience gained in the Western democracies as also in the Communist countries will not be of much avail to us. We have to march ahead on our own steam with unwavering faith.

### **‘Not by Bread Alone’**

In the last analysis, we have to constantly bear in mind that man does not live by bread alone. A really integrated personality could be evolved only through a proper synthe-

sis of science and spirituality; the greatness of a nation should be judged not merely by the heights of economic progress but by the quality and character of the citizens and their capacity to face the challenges of life with courage and perseverance. In the absence of human, moral and ethical values, the accumulation of wealth would be like a magnificent edifice built on sands. As Crossland observes in his 'Future of Socialism', 'we do not want to enter the age of abundance only to find that we have lost the values which might teach us how to enjoy it.'

I cannot resist the temptation of quoting the following sentences from the Foreword written by Pandit Nehru to my book on "Socialism in Indian Planning," only two days before his passing away on May 25, 1964 :

"Socialism has become rather a vague word, with many meanings attached to it. In the modern world with its dynamism and its tremendous technological progress, it is clear that this concept of socialism itself undergoes a change, and yet its fundamental principles remain. In India, it is important for us to profit by modern technical processes and increase our production both in agriculture and industry. But, in doing so, we must not forget that the essential objective to be aimed at is the quality of the individual and the concept of dharma underlying it."

Let us hope and pray that this vision of Jawaharlal Nehru, which happens to be the last expression of his considered thought on socialism, would continue to inspire our efforts for building up a new India on the foundations of democracy, secularism and socialism.

## CHAPTER VIII

### “Garibi Hatao” : the Gandhian Way

We should sincerely welcome the “Garibi Hatao” programme sponsored by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to eradicate poverty, hunger and unemployment. It must be conceded frankly that during the last 28 years of our freedom, although there are many achievements to our credit, we have not been able to ameliorate the social and economic conditions of the weakest sections in any noticeable manner. For example, the lot of Harijans, Adivasis and other backward classes, more specially landless labour in rural areas and slum-dwellers in urban centres, has not registered any substantial improvement. It is, therefore, imperative that certain concrete measures are taken by the Union and State Governments to raise the living standards of these vulnerable sections without further delay.

#### Eternal Principle

These economic measures should, however, be undertaken within the framework of our Parliamentary democracy in a constitutional manner. There must be no room for violence, mutual hatred or class-war. We cannot afford to overlook the eternal principle enunciated by Mahatma Gandhi that noble objectives could never be achieved through impure and violent methods. Purity of the means



should be considered as important as the purity of the aims. We should, therefore, resolve to revolutionise the existing economic pattern through peaceful means, but with a sense of urgency.

There should also be no manner of doubt that the old and traditional theories would not serve any purpose. Our economists have been holding out hopes that substantial rise in national income and the rate of economic growth would automatically improve the living conditions of the poorer sections as well. These hopes have proved to be illusory. Professor Peter Townsend wrote a series of articles in *The Times*, London, on "The Problems of Social Growth." After quoting relevant facts and figures, he reveals that legislation in the United Kingdom during recent decades, instead of reducing the gap between the haves and the have-nots, has made the rich richer and the poor poorer. In the United States too, the economic condition of the weaker sections, especially the Negro population, has not shown any visible improvement despite phenomenal growth in the Gross National Product. Even in the Soviet Union, public sector industries and collective farms have not led to a faster rate of economic growth and the Russian planners are now openly accusing the bureaucracy of lack of awareness of the welfare of people as a whole. It is, therefore, incumbent on us to formulate specific programmes very soon to help the under-privileged sections in a very direct and positive manner.

### **'Golden Mean'**

Here again, we must follow the 'middle path' in accordance with the Directive Principles enshrined in our Constitution. In terms of the Industrial Policy Resolution 1956, there has to be a public sector in the defence, key and heavy industries. Even Mahatma Gandhi had visualised that these basic industries should necessarily be owned

and managed by the State. It is true that the public sector in India has not yet been able to project a good image of efficiency and profitability over the years. But there is no cause for despair. Every nerve should be strained to make the State enterprises yield bigger surpluses for further national investment. The public sector should also gradually expand, even in the sphere of a few consumer industries for the benefit of the masses.

Even so, there would still remain a wide scope for the functioning of private sector in the country. In fact, the private sector in India is not so private; it has been regulated in a variety of ways by a series of laws after Independence. Both the public and private sectors are, to be sure, integral parts of the national sector. I should, however, like to emphasise that in the private sector, much greater encouragement should be extended to the cooperative sector. Furthermore, there ought to be a healthy emulation between the private and public sector industries; the current cold war between the two must not be allowed to continue. I may add that an indiscriminate policy of nationalisation would not be able to deliver the goods.

It is obvious that the Government should accord greater opportunities to new and young entrepreneurs in the industrial sphere with a view to diffusing and decentralising economic power and checking monopolistic trends. But if new entrepreneurs do not come forward to set up industries in the private sector owing to paucity of resources or technical experience, there should be no hesitation in issuing the necessary licences to established industrial groups in the ultimate interests of increased production. Recent reports regarding the five-year plans in Soviet Russia also indicate that a number of material incentives are being offered to managers and workers for augmenting production in agriculture and industry. It is significant that the Russian Government is now talking of "socialist competition" for the achievement of this basic objective.

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unemployed could earn at least a rupee and a half a day to meet their minimum requirements. All the Central and State schemes in the districts were integrated properly and a senior Secretary to the State Government had been placed in the overall charge of this programme.

In urban areas, the problem of unemployment is more complicated and difficult. Nonetheless, the State Government adopted several measures to reduce joblessness among the educated classes. A good number of short-term technical and vocational courses were introduced during and after the Matriculation stage. Many scholarships and sizable loans were given to unemployed engineers and technicians for various programmes of self-employment. The Government also announced that no grants would be given to new arts and commerce colleges which tend to produce, by and large, "unemployable" graduates.

### Gainful Employment

Provision for full employment will go a long way in removing poverty, up to a point. In truth, gainful employment to a hungry person is the best form of social welfare. Nevertheless, some more direct assistance will have to be extended to the weakest sections of the population, particularly the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes. To this end, the State Government had decided to set up a Tribal Development Corporation which would provide loans to the Adivasis, both for productive as well as consumption needs. This is the only way in which the tribal population could be salvaged from the clutches of money-lenders.

Further, a Rural Housing Board was established to take care of the housing requirements of these backward classes in rural areas. This Board would advance long-term loans on nominal rates of interest to the economically backward classes for building simple and cheap houses. On my suggestion, the Life Insurance Corporation also agreed to

### Gaping Gulf

Additionally, several fiscal measures will be necessary for bridging the gaping gulf between the rich and the poor. The proposal to impose a ceiling on urban property should be treated as a correct step towards socialism. Acharya Vinoba Bhave has also welcomed it. With the imposition of ceilings on land, a limitation on urban property is just and inevitable. There is, perhaps, some scope for reviewing the existing taxation on industries from the standpoint of encouraging production and generating surpluses for further investment.

It is obvious, however, that these measures alone will not be able to solve the fundamental problems of poverty and unemployment. We will have to take certain positive steps to improve the lot of the vulnerable segments of our population in a direct and effective way. In this context, the Union and State Governments must exert their utmost to provide productive employment to all those who ask for it. The "crash programme" recently launched by the Government of India is a welcome step in this direction; but it is not enough. We must now tackle this problem in a more comprehensive and thorough manner.

After the introduction of President's rule in Gujarat, I took up the experiment of full employment in a big way. Under the "Right to Work" programme, the State announced that in rural areas all those who seek employment could register their names with the local Panchayat. The Taluka Panchayat would see to it that the persons concerned are provided with productive work as near their village as possible under various Central and State schemes like minor irrigation, soil conservation, afforestation, road construction, etc.

In the case of old and infirm men and women who could not move out of the village, the Khadi and Village Industries Board would provide Ambar Charkhas so that the

unemployed could earn at least a rupee and a half a day to meet their minimum requirements. All the Central and State schemes in the districts were integrated properly and a senior Secretary to the State Government had been placed in the overall charge of this programme.

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make available to the State Government necessary finances for taking up a bold housing programme in urban areas for serving those who earn less than Rs. 5,000 a year. It is strange that so far our housing programmes have not touched these lower income groups at all. The LIC gave us Rs 1.5 crores for this scheme during that year. This programme of urban housing for the lower income groups would benefit primary and secondary teachers, non-teaching staff of colleges and universities, Class III and Class IV employees of the Government and municipalities, working journalists, artisans and slum-dwellers, specially the scavenging class.

### Waste Lands

The Government also decided to distribute all waste land to Harijans, Adivasis and other backward classes, including cattle-breeders, within a few months. About one lakh acres were distributed after the introduction of President's rule and another lakh were given away to the vulnerable sections before the end of the year.

Besides agriculture, positive encouragement was given to these backward classes for animal husbandry and dairying schemes on a cooperative basis. The milk price policy was revised to encourage the production of cow's milk so that better bullocks may be available for farming. The State Agro-Industries Corporation sponsored a number of rural and village industries in the countryside for supplementing the meagre incomes of the small farmers. A chain of rural workshops were organised for meeting the needs of repairs and servicing of agricultural implements, irrigation pumps and small machines in the villages.

The State also introduced work-oriented basic education in all primary schools throughout Gujarat. Mahatma Gandhi had underscored the need for linking education with creative and productive work so that students may imbibe dignity of labour and become self-reliant. It is high time

our educational system was reoriented towards the basic pattern with a sense of emergency. Otherwise, expansion of education would inevitably lead to larger unemployment among the educated classes and imperil the very foundations of our democratic structure.

Gujarat is the only State which has continued its policy of Prohibition with vigour and earnestness. In my view, Prohibition should not be regarded as a moral ideal. It is essentially a programme for the social and economic betterment of the weaker classes. I earnestly feel that this programme should find a proper place in the campaign of "Garibi Hatao" in the country.

The existing legal procedures are also very cumbersome, dilatory and expensive, beyond the reach of the common man. It is essential to make them simple and cheap for the benefit of the poorer categories of our people.

Lastly, no stone should be left unturned for holding the priceline. All our schemes for removing poverty and unemployment would founder on the rocks of inflation and rising prices. In this context, the building up of a strong consumer movement in India is of crucial importance. Systematic steps must be taken to establish a chain of consumers' cooperative stores in all the cities and villages, and honest and efficient workers should be trained speedily to man these cooperative institutions.

The Government should also try to build up adequate buffer stocks of essential consumer goods like foodgrains, sugar and oil. Whenever necessary, a system of levy should be introduced for procuring these consumer articles at reasonable prices. The State should not hesitate to introduce strategic physical controls as well, if the normal channels of trade behave in an anti-social fashion.

This, in brief, is the Gandhian approach to the "Garibi Hatao" programme launched by our Prime Minister.



went on : "In such a scheme, the basic criterion in determining social policies and the lines of economic advance must necessarily be the interest of the community as a whole, and specially of its weaker sections." And further: "Where the bulk of the people live so close to the margin of poverty, the claims of social justice, of the right to work, of equal opportunity and a minimum level of living have great urgency."

The Fourth Five Year Plan was even more categorical in highlighting the crucial importance of interlinking a speedy rate of economic growth with the reduction of social tensions and disparities: "The objective of national planning in India is not only to raise the per capita income but also to ensure that the benefits are evenly distributed, that disparities in income and living are not widened but in fact narrowed, and that the process of economic development does not lead to social tensions endangering the fabric of the democratic society. . . . In the last analysis, planned economic development should result in a more even distribution of benefits, a fuller life for an increasingly large number of people, and the building up of a strong integrated democratic nation".

### The 'Approach' Paper

The "Approach" paper placed by the Planning Commission before the National Development Council also underlined, more or less, the same ideas. It, however, laid special stress on the urgent need for making a frontal attack on the problems of unemployment and under-employment and on providing the basic minimum needs to all citizens within a specified period. While I deeply appreciate this additional emphasis on fuller employment and the provision of minimum levels of living, it would be but fair to point out that ideas contained in the "Approach" paper of the Planning Commission could not claim any originality and will be found in all the four Five Year Plans, more or less, in the same language. It must, however, be conceded that the imple-

mentation of these ideas during the last two decades of Indian Planning has been halting and piecemeal, lacking strong will and determination. There has also been paucity of resources provided for various programmes which could have resulted in better social and economic justice along with the rise in national and per capita incomes. If the Planning Commission is now able to find all the necessary resources for providing employment opportunities in the rural as well as urban areas in the country, and if concerted efforts are made to supply basic minimum necessities to the masses relating to good and purposeful education, health facilities including family planning, supply of drinking water, housing, construction of rural approach roads, supply of electric power and the improvement of slums, there is little doubt that the primary goal of "Growth with Social Justice" would be achieved within a shorter period. This, however, presupposes the existence of an efficient administrative machinery at the district, taluka and village levels, which would be responsive to the urges of the community and strain every nerve to attain the specified objectives within the time schedule.

### Development-oriented Education

I should, however, like to highlight the crucial importance of re-vamping the existing system of education in India with a sense of emergency. If our educational pattern continues to be 'bookish' and academic divorced from the realities of life, and does not become work-oriented, creating an atmosphere of productivity all along the line, I am convinced that all our aspirations of achieving an accelerated rate of economic growth, social justice and full employment would remain idle dreams. Many years ago Mahatma Gandhi had placed before the country the scheme of Basic education so that educational institutions could become, more or less, self-reliant and self-sufficient, at least as far as their recurring expenditures are concerned. Since then

India attained political freedom and launched in a big way plans of economic development covering all sectors of national economy. It is, therefore, imperative that education in our schools and colleges should be effectively linked with numerous development programmes in the respective areas so that the students may have the opportunity of participating in productive and developmental work and imbibe dignity of labour, instead of hankering after 'white collar' jobs and Government services. Students should be encouraged to stand on their own feet through self-employment. In the absence of such a development-oriented system of education, we shall be faced with the very difficult problem of educated unemployment, which would endanger and imperil the very foundations of democracy by creating conditions of violent disorders.

### **'Middle' Technology**

It should also be understood in unequivocal terms that developing countries like India will have to evolve their own pattern of technology, which will, naturally, be different from the highly sophisticated technology of the developed nations. In India, the basic problem is to provide productive work to idle manpower which has been increasing steadily over the years. Despite the Family Planning programmes, the Planning Commission calculates that over 220 million people are currently living below the poverty line, mainly due to forced unemployment and under-employment. It is quite evident that these large numbers of unemployed persons cannot be supplied with employment only in large industrial establishments. It is essential to absorb their idle energy in a variety of small-scale, village, cottage and home industries. Doubtless, these smaller establishments must necessarily upgrade and improve their existing technology through the use of modern science. Evolution of this 'middle' technology would require constant study and re-

search, so that the fundamental goal of increasing the Gross National Product (G.N.P.) together with fuller employment and equitable distribution is achieved without much difficulty. Professor Gunnar Myrdal, in his monumental work entitled "Asian Drama : An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations", has strongly supported Mahatma Gandhi's plea for the organisation of rural industries on a very big scale. Writes Dr. Myrdal: "There was an essential element of rationality in Gandhiji's social and economic gospel, and the programmes for promoting cottage industry as they have been evolved in the post-war era, have come more to represent purposeful and realistic planning for development." The learned Professor has repudiated the general economic theory that large-scale mechanisation ultimately provides larger volume of employment through its 'spread effects'. He asserts that these 'spread effects' of large-scale industries are more than neutralised and negated by the 'backwash' effects, because 'the slight increase in demand for labour in new modern enterprises will be more than offset by reductions in labour demands in traditional manufacturing'. Dr. Schumacher, former Chairman of the British Coal Board, has strongly advocated the use of 'Intermediate' technology in under-developed countries by adopting the machines to the special requirements of the developing nations. This is the only way of organising the physical labour of millions of our people into a vast productive force in cities as well as villages. Professor Lewis Mumford, in his important publication entitled "Myth of the Machine", also explains how in poorer countries, with millions of unemployed and under-employed, the 'Megamachine' should, in fact, be the 'labour machine', harnessing the vast energies of the masses for productive purposes.

### Wages and Productivity

For augmenting industrial and agricultural production, it is also essential that wages are properly linked to the level

of productivity. If the working classes continue to insist only on their rights, without simultaneously heeding their duties, the productive apparatus would, sooner than later, come to a grinding halt. In a developing country like India, it is, therefore, imperative that the system of piece wages is introduced widely in the spheres of industry as well as farming. To quote the forceful words of Gandhiji: "In fact the right to perform one's duties is the only right that is worth living for and dying for. . . . If all simply insist on rights and no duties, there will be utter confusion and chaos".

### **Growth and Social Cohesion**

Furthermore, the urgent need for bringing about better social equality and cohesion in the Indian population cannot be over-emphasised. Unfortunately, during the last twenty-eight years of our political freedom, it has not yet been possible for us to eradicate untouchability, despite a clear directive contained in the Indian Constitution. Liquidation of untouchability and other social evils is not merely a matter of social reform. These social inequities have to be uprooted with a firm hand because they stand in the way of achieving higher production and a speedy rate of economic growth. This sociological and economic phenomenon has been highlighted by Dr. Myrdal with great clarity. He points out that lack of social cohesion hampers rapid economic development for a variety of reasons. For example, the existence of untouchability in the villages retards the creative efficiency of landless labour and promotes friction and conflicts in the productive apparatus of agriculture. It is, therefore, imperative that these social handicaps are rooted out with a determined and resolute will in order to be able to speed up our pace of economic progress. This is not merely a visionary ideal advocated by the Mahatma; it is a compelling necessity in the vital interests of national growth in all spheres of economic activity.

### Land Reforms

A word about the recent controversy relating to the imposition of ceilings on land. While the need for promoting economic equality in rural and urban areas is surely desirable, it must be borne in mind that the aim of land reforms should necessarily be social justice as also increased production in agriculture. If agrarian reforms sap and diminish the initiative and enthusiasm of the farmers for achieving higher production of food as well as commercial crops, we shall inevitably face a national crisis heading towards famine and unemployment. It is true that the implementation of land reforms during the last two or three decades has been tardy and inefficient. Even so, instead of introducing new reforms it would be more appropriate and fruitful if the existing land legislations in different States are enforced in an earnest and thorough manner. Fresh controversies are likely to create an atmosphere of uncertainty in the minds of the agriculturists and this would, doubtless, be very prejudicial to achieving the targets of additional production. Even if it is considered necessary to introduce new reforms at this stage, they should be done quickly and it should be made abundantly clear to the peasantry that no further measures will be required to be taken during the next 15 or 20 years.

### Prices of Essential Commodities

Lastly, economic growth with social justice would be impossible of achievement without ensuring the price of essential commodities under effective control. The Government is bound to hit the poorest sections of the community. Therefore, absolutely necessary to stabilise the price level of these commodities which ensure the well-being of the common man, especially, for consumption and for the production of other commodities. This could be done by the Government by increasing production, secondly, by the fixing of prices of essential commodities, and thirdly, by rationing.

bution through fair-price shops, and, fourthly, by promoting a sound consumer movement in the urban areas and the countryside. In the absence of these measures, the vicious circle of wages chasing prices and vice versa would make a nonsense of all our planning.

### **Need for Economic Discipline**

In the ultimate analysis, the objective of 'economic growth with social justice' could be realized only if there existed the requisite economic and social discipline among the people. "Democracy, disciplined and enlightened", observed Gandhiji, "is the finest thing in the world". Such a democracy could be sustained only by engendering vigilant awareness among the masses as regards their interests as well as obligations. As Mahatma Gandhi had observed, 'it is neither paper legislation nor brave words nor fiery speeches but the power of non-violent organisation, discipline and sacrifice that constitutes the real bulwark of the people against injustice or oppression'.

## CHAPTER X

# Helping People Below the Poverty Line

I need hardly mention that the quintessence of Gandhian thought has been the first concern for the poorest and the low-list. It was John Ruskin's book entitled 'Unto this Last' which convinced Mahatma Gandhi that 'if mankind was to progress and to realise the ideals of equality and brotherhood' it must act on the principle of paying the highest attention to the prime needs of the weakest sections of the population. Many years ago, Gandhiji had given us a 'talisman': "Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, try the following expedient: Recall the face of the poorest and most helpless man whom you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him."

### A Timely Warning

Recently, the Club of Rome, consisting of the top scientists and economists of the world, has been driven to the conclusion that "if the present growth trends in world population, industrialisation, pollution, food production and resource depletion continue unchanged, the limit to growth on this planet will be reached *sometime within the next one hundred years*; the most probable result will be a rather sudden and uncontrollable decline in both population and industrial



capacity." The statement adds: "It is possible to alter these growth trends and to establish a condition of ecological and economic stability that is sustainable far into the future. The state of global equilibrium could be designed so that the basic material needs of each person on earth are satisfied and each person has an equal opportunity to realise his individual human potential".

According to Acharya Vinoba, the traditional economic theory based on the belief that a high rate of growth would automatically percolate to the lowest segments of the population has failed miserably. Experience in all developing countries has demonstrated beyond an iota of doubt that the benefits of a fast growth rate do not necessarily filter down to the vulnerable sections of the people. It is more likely that the fruits of development are reaped by the richer sections. Professor Galbraith, in his recent publication entitled '**Economics and the Public Purpose**' also makes a significant observation that "left to themselves, economic forces do not work out for the best except, perhaps, for the powerful".

### **Below the Poverty Line**

The Draft of the Fifth Five Year Plan rightly emphasizes the removal of poverty as one of the basic objectives of national Planning. It is estimated that at least 220 million people, who constitute 40 per cent of the population in India, live below the poverty line. This line had been defined by the Planning Commission as private consumption at the level of forty rupees per capita per month at 1972-73 prices. The galloping inflation over the years has tended to push up this line even further.

The most challenging task, therefore, before all the economists, scientists, technicians and planners is to devise ways and means of raising the living standards of millions of our people who still live below this poverty line, in rural

as well as urban areas. We must discover various practical measures to render direct assistance to these vast chunks of our population so that they could lead a life of minimum human decency as free and equal citizens of this great and ancient land. This could, obviously, be done only by: (a) ensuring full employment to these weakest sections and (b) helping them raise their capacity to increase production. In the rural areas, those who live below the line of poverty would, evidently, include landless labourers, submarginal farmers and small artisans. In the cities, this hapless category would cover un-organised labour, slum dwellers and those who sleep on the pavements. The Adivasis and the Harijans are, doubtless, the worst sufferers.

How could the Research scientists in our National Laboratories assist these vulnerable sections of our population? This is a task which demands our most urgent attention and brooks no delay. If we fail to run to the rescue of these unfortunate people, all our plans for democratic socialism would remain vacant dreams. Furthermore, continuing economic and social inequalities would jeopardise the very foundations of our democracy and even political freedom.

### A Few Suggestions

Let me throw up a few concrete suggestions. Science and technology could help the submarginal farmers, landless labour and poor artisans by trying to evolve what is now commonly known as 'appropriate' technology which would be, in the very nature of things, more labour-intensive and yet sufficiently productive as compared with capital-intensive techniques of developed nations. Dr Schumacher of the United Kingdom who has been working on this 'appropriate' or 'intermediate' technology for several years declares in unequivocal terms that a blind imitation of Western technology by the developing nations would accentuate the problems of poverty and unemployment. As Gandhiji used to tell us

repeatedly, our main aim should be directed not towards 'mass production' but 'production by the masses.' This could be done only by devising improved tools and implements which the poor peasants and artisans could easily afford to handle. Big and automatic machines will not serve their purpose, except in a very limited way of reclaiming waste lands. In place of costly chemical fertilizers, it is necessary to train the tillers in the simple but scientific techniques of compost and green manures. Instead of expensive tractors, the small farmer urgently requires efficient and hardy bullocks for his cultivation. When I visited the Japan's rural areas some years ago, I was surprised to find that the peasants there were using more bullocks than power-tillers for augmenting their yields per acre. On enquiry, they replied with firmness: "Sir, we look upon these bullocks as 'foolproof tractors' which do not easily go out of order for want of spare parts or mechanics; besides, the cows give us milk and also organic manure for enriching our soil."

### Cow-dung Gas Plants

I would also refer to the immense potentialities of the cow-dung gas plants which could revolutionise the Indian countryside in a visible manner without much cost and training. These gas plants would not only make for better hygiene and sanitation but also provide the farmers and rural technicians with rich manure, cheap fuel and motive power. It is essential to devise methods for building cheap and durable houses based on local raw materials for the rural masses. Their health has also to be protected adequately with the help of Nature Cure and inexpensive systems of treatment. Nutritional research must provide them with balanced diet which they can afford to consume. Their hearths and cooking methods ought to be re-designed for checking waste of energy and environmental pollution. The local spinning wheels need technical improvements for making the weaker

sections self-sufficient in their cloth requirements. The techniques of other cottage and village industries like pottery, leather-work, oil pressing, paper-making, rice-hulling, gum manufacture and bee-keeping need to be upgraded.

### Sun, Air and Water

At a time when the developing countries are faced with serious shortages of energy for productive purposes, our scientists could make a variety of experiments for harnessing solar power which is plentiful in tropical countries like India. In addition, the air and water resources of the country could be utilised for stepping up agricultural and industrial production in a big way. We must, however, constantly bear in mind the requirements of the poorer segments all the time. If these new sources of energy are made available only to the richer categories, the man below the poverty line would continue to remain where he is today. Maybe, he will be pushed down even further below to the 'point of no return'. This would be a tragedy beyond words and would make nonsense of all our plans which profess to usher in the era of peace, progress and prosperity.

It is good to know that the World Bank will spend \$ 7,500 million over the next five years on agricultural and rural development projects for helping the world's poorest people. A 425-page Bank report titled "The Assault on World Poverty" mentions that about 260 million people, who have an annual per capita income of \$ 50 or less will be the main beneficiaries of the programmes. In his Preface to the report, the World Bank President, Robert McNamara, remarks that millions of these people live 'a condition of life so degrading as it is a insult to human dignity'. The report, however, states that the Bank's programme would make only a marginal contribution to solving the problem of people living in poverty.

The World Bank project would mainly concentrate on advancing loans for such projects as would augment the productivity of the rural poor by at least 5 per cent annually. The Report argues that the focus on small farms is justified by various studies which show that the productivity of small farmers is higher than that of large farmers because they tend to use labour and other agricultural inputs more intensively. Land Reform is another factor cited in the study as a major factor in improving the life of the poor in rural areas. The report also points out that education and health services which now tend to favour the rich and the urban dwellers should be more readily available to rural dwellers.

It is hoped that the rich and developed countries would fully cooperate with the World Bank in its efforts to eradicate poverty in different poor and developing countries even though in a marginal measure. In turn, the developing countries themselves could help one another in a variety of ways through mutual cooperation, comradeship and goodwill.

## CHAPTER XI

### Economics of Cow Protection

I have no shadow of doubt that the economic development of India could be speeded up only by according a very high priority to agriculture and allied activities. If agriculture is the backbone of our economic planning, animal husbandry and dairying are the very backbone of Indian agriculture. That is why senior and experienced economists of India and abroad have expressed the view in unequivocal terms that the standard of living of the Indian masses could be raised visibly through improved agriculture, scientific animal husbandry and dairy development. Besides, agro-industries too will have to be organised throughout the countryside in a systematic way.

#### **'Dual Purpose' Cattle**

Our Five Year Plans have made it abundantly clear that animal husbandry in India should aim at the development of 'dual purpose' cattle so that we could produce much larger quantities of milk for human consumption and also procure sturdy bullocks of high quality. It was from this angle that Mahatma Gandhi stressed the urgent need for developing the cow wealth of India as the base of our rural economy. It is the cow alone that can give us wholesome

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useful bullocks for farming and also plentiful organic matter for enriching the soil. The buffalo could serve our cultural needs only in some rice-yielding areas with assured rainfall. In all other regions, we would require strong bullock power to serve the farming requirements. Our attachment, therefore, attached so much importance to the cow and made it even an object of worship. We now only worship the cow but do not take adequate steps to develop her into a really useful unit of national planning.

### Bullocks vs. Machines

It is sometimes argued that we should evolve single purpose cattle only for milk, and that the bullocks could be replaced by tractors and other machines. This is again a misconception. With small and uneconomic land holdings spread all over the country, the tractor could not become a sound economic proposition. Mechanisation could surely be utilised for reclaiming new lands but not for ploughing small and scattered fields. Moreover, it is wrong to think that mere application of the machine increases our productivity per acre. Agricultural economists all over the world maintain that mechanisation increases the yields per unit of labour but not per unit of land. In countries where there are vast areas of uncultivated land and the labour is scarce as in America and Soviet Union, mechanisation becomes unavoidable. But in over-populated countries like India we must employ labour-intensive methods and use our animal power to the fullest extent. Some years ago, a survey by the Planning Commission had indicated that about 50 per cent of the tractors and other farming machines in the country were lying idle owing to paucity of trained mechanics and spare parts. Such a colossal waste of our scarce resources in a poor country like India cannot be afforded.

that the farmers there were using in an increasing measure the cows for cultivation. Earlier, Japan was using power tillers and tractors in a big way. When I asked the farmers as to why they had taken to the cow, they replied with a smile: "Sir, the machines gave us neither milk nor manure. Without organic manures the fertility of our soil was depleted considerably. We have, therefore, come to the conclusion that the cow must become the basis of our rural economy." The farmers added. "There is a saying in Japan that the excessive use of chemical fertilisers is good for parents but bad for sons." The obvious implication is that excessive doses of artificial manures give us a few bumper crops, but the fertility of the soil soon declines steeply. I do hope that we shall not repeat the mistakes of Japan in India, because such mistakes prove to be very costly for developing countries like ours.

It is useful to know that organic farming has been making considerable headway in the United Kingdom and several other countries of Europe. Experienced British organic farmers secure rather better yields than the national average. "Though their labour costs may be higher, these are more than balanced by savings on the chemical fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides, herbicides and stock-feed which they do not buy at prices that rise faster and faster with inflation."

It is from this standpoint that the Planning Commission and the Government of India have been emphasising the urgent need of developing 'dual purpose' cattle in the countryside so that we could provide for more milk and better bullocks for draught purposes. This is not a matter of sentiment or religious fervour; it is a hard reality which must be faced by all of us without delay. The present cross-breeding policy should also be attuned to this aim. Such cross-breed-



ing could be either with indigenous cattle or even with exotic breeds. But the basic aim of procuring more milk and at the same time evolving good draught cattle should not be lost sight of. Otherwise, in our anxiety to produce more milk, we shall be inflicting incalculable damage to agriculture.

### National Plans

In the Second Five Year Plan, the all-India breeding policy, as drawn up by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and accepted by the Central and State Governments, was defined as under :

- (a) in the case of well-defined milch breeds the milking capacity should be developed to the maximum by selective breeding and the male progeny should be used for the development of the non-descript cattle.
- (b) in the case of well-defined draught breeds, the objective is to put as much milk in them as possible without materially impairing their quality for work.

The Third Five Year Plan clarified this policy further: "The breeding policy is, thus, to evolve and develop 'dual purpose' breeds which will provide both good bullocks for efficient cultivation and increased quantities of milk for human consumption." It added : "It is proposed to undertake cross-breeding with exotic breeds in regions of high altitudes which have heavy rainfall."

The Fourth Five Year Plan, while continuing the above-mentioned cattle-breeding policy, made a mention of "cross-breeding with exotic breeds in hilly areas and other places where there are facilities for the rearing and maintaining of high-yielding milch cattle and in urban areas and around industrial townships to ensure adequate supply of milk." It would, however, be necessary "to ensure that there

is no uncontrolled cross-breeding and that action is taken within the framework of these guidelines."

The draft of the Fifth Five Year Plan goes several steps further and contemplates "an aggressive cross-breeding programme with semen from exotic proved stock." The number of exotic cattle breeding farms is proposed to be increased from 25 to 35. The 'Operation Flood' Programme was, in the main, meant to augment the production of milk in rural areas, especially in the hinterlands of big cities. While this programme is desirable in itself, it should not be allowed to hamper the growth of 'dual purpose' cattle in the country for serving the vital interests of Indian agriculture.

### **Economics of 'Cross Breeding'**

In our enthusiasm to launch a 'massive programme' of cross-breeding with exotic breeds, we should also not overlook the fact that such cross-bred animals are more susceptible to various kinds of diseases and need very delicate and constant attention. It would, perhaps, be much better to experiment with cross-breeding within indigenous breeds and upgrade the existing quality through selective breeding and better feeding. At any rate, in our inordinate concern to put in more milk in our cows, we should not undermine the draught quality of our bullocks.

### **Milk Price Policy**

With a view to developing dual purpose cows in India, it is essential that the present milk price policy is oriented to this basic objective. If the price of milk is determined solely on the basis of fat, the cow is bound to be pushed to the wall. If, however, the price of milk is calculated on the basis of fat and SNF (solids not fat), I am confident that the cow shall be in a position to compete effectively with the buffalo and become a viable economic proposition. Some

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Governments have already taken the necessary steps in this direction, and I hope that other States will follow suit. In this context, I should like to quote the following paragraph on 'Dairying and Milk Supply' in the Third Five Year Plan :

"Dairying programmes will be effectively interwoven with the economy of the surrounding villages with a view to promoting the policy of encouraging the development of dual purpose animals. It is widely recognised that with the exception of a few rice tracts, where the buffalo may serve both purposes, dual breeds of cows have to be encouraged through animal husbandry and dairying schemes. With this end in view, the loan assistance for the purchase of milch animals will be more purposive in nature during the Third Plan and will be directed towards the fulfilment of the breeding policy. In order to promote good breeds of cows, to the extent feasible, cow's milk should be purchased by plants at the same price as buffalo milk. The percentage of the fat content should not be regarded as the sole criterion for fixing the price of milk. Although the cow's milk has a lesser fat content, it has several other special qualities on account of which it is preferred for use by children and by patients in hospitals."

It is also necessary to educate public opinion in respect on a wide basis. If cow's milk is consumed as and not converted into butter and ghee, the above-mentioned milk price policy would, doubtless, promote the development of 'dual purpose' animals. That is why Gandhi desired that the people in cities and villages should purchase cow's milk which may not contain as much fat as buffalo's milk, but is richer in several other respects. We do not utilise the products of the cow, we may even worship her, but will not be able to save her from



1. Agriculture is, doubtless, the backbone of Indian economic planning; animal husbandry and dairying are, indeed, the very backbone of our agricultural development. From this angle, the cow in India must be accorded a high place in our national plans.
2. The breeding policy relating to the development of cattle in India should lay special stress on the evolution of dual purpose breeds which would provide much larger quantities of milk for human consumption as well as good bullocks for efficient cultivation. The needs of the small farmer, who constitutes the largest percentage of the rural community, ought to be constantly kept in view.
3. Programmes of cross-breeding, with exotic breeds, may be undertaken in areas where there are adequate facilities for the rearing and maintaining of high-yielding milch cattle. Such cross-breeding schemes should be properly controlled and action taken within the framework of well-defined guidelines.
4. The plan to extend artificial insemination on a big scale needs careful scrutiny. At any rate, the experience gained so far in this sphere should be reviewed and results properly evaluated.
5. The price of milk should be calculated on the basis of both fat and solids not fat (SNF). The special qualities of cow's milk would be a legitimate topic for further study, research, and education of public opinion.
6. Provision of adequate feeds and fodder is indispensable for the speedy promotion of cattle wealth in the country. In this context, the export of cattle feeds must be stopped forthwith.

In addition, systematic programmes of mixed farming should be undertaken on a large scale. The establishment of a good number of fodder seed production farms, fodder banks and forage conservation centres should be accorded a high priority in the Fifth Five Year Plan.

7. Urgent steps should be taken to enact necessary legislation for the quality control of cattle feeds in the country.

It is heartening to know that the recommendations of the Wardha Seminar have been, by and large, accepted by the Government of India and the State Governments as a national policy on animal husbandry and dairy development.

## CHAPTER XII

### Is Prohibition a "Gandhian fad" ?

Many years before Independence, Mahatma Gandhi had declared : "If I were appointed dictator even for one hour for all India, the first thing I would do would be to close without compensation all the liquor shops." He had further observed that liquor was "an invention of the devil" and "nothing but ruin stares a nation in the face that is a prey to the drink habit." The plea for Prohibition is generally brushed aside as a 'Gandhian fad'. Gandhiji was a practical idealist and had advanced a strong defence for Prohibition mainly because he was deeply concerned with the sad plight of the poorer sections of the population, particularly the factory labour in the cities and the landless Harijans and Adivasis in the rural areas.

#### A Brief History

In line with the history of the Prohibition campaign during the pre-Independence period, Article 47 of the Indian Constitution directs the State Governments "to endeavour to bring about Prohibition of the consumption, except for medicinal purposes, of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health." The Working Committee of the Indian National Congress adopted a resolution on April 5, 1954 urging the Planning Commission

to "evolve a national programme for the fulfilment of this Directive Principle."

Accordingly, the Planning Commission had appointed a Prohibition Enquiry Committee under my Chairmanship on the 16th December 1954. The members of this Committee included Smt. Sucheta Kripalani, Shri S. R. Vasavada of the INTUC, Dr. Bhasker Patel of Bombay, Dr. P. J. Thomas, the noted economist, and Shri G. Ramachandran. After going round the country and examining many witnesses, including leaders of public opinion, this Committee submitted its Report on the 24th October, 1955 and recommended that "Prohibition should be regarded as an integral part of national development." It also suggested 1st April 1958 as the target date for completing nation-wide Prohibition.

Subsequently, this subject was discussed in the first Sovereign Parliament of India which adopted, on the 31st March 1956, the following unanimous resolution, with the full support of all the political parties: "This House is of opinion that Prohibition should be regarded as an integral part of the Second Five Year Plan and recommends that the Planning Commission should formulate the necessary programme to bring about nation-wide Prohibition speedily and effectively."

The Second Five Year Plan examined the recommendations of the Prohibition Enquiry Committee which were generally approved by the National Development Council as well. It was stated that "in the consideration of any basic social policy, financial considerations, although of great practical importance, are not to be treated as decisive in character." The Second Plan also mentioned in categorical terms that "there is need for a common approach towards Prohibition for the country as a whole." It was recommended that, as a first step, the State Government may take action in the following directions:



- “(1) discontinuance of advertisements and public inducements relating to drink;
- (2) stoppage of drinking in public premises (hotels, hostels, restaurants, clubs) and at public receptions.
- (3) setting up of technical committees to draw up phased programmes with the object of
  - (a) reducing progressively the number of liquor shops both in rural and urban areas;
  - (b) closing liquor shops for an increasing number of days during the week;
  - (c) reducing quantities supplied to liquor shops;
  - (d) progressively reducing the strength of distilled liquor produced by distilleries in India;
  - (e) closing of shops in and near specified industrial and living quarters in towns and villages;
  - (f) removal of shops to places away from main streets and living quarters in towns and villages;
- (4) taking active steps to encourage and promote the production of cheap and healthy soft drinks;
- (5) assisting voluntary agencies in organising recreation centres; and
- (6) including Prohibition as an item of constructive work in national extension and community project areas and social welfare extension projects.”

The Third Five Year Plan noted with regret that the suggestions made in the Second Plan had been acted upon by some State Governments, “but for the country as a whole, progress has been slow.” It reiterated that “financial considerations are not to be treated as decisive in character.” “The possible loss of resources on account of Prohibition may itself be a temporary rather than a permanent effect and on balance may turn out to be smaller than sometimes reckon-

ed." It added: "Obviously, financial reasons alone could not lead to a fundamental break in carrying out a social programme which is considered necessary in the interest of the mass of the people throughout the country."

Later, the Planning Commission suggested that as a positive incentive to those State Governments which have so far not introduced Prohibition in a comprehensive manner, the Government of India should agree to reimburse 50 per cent of the actual losses in excise revenue for a period of five years. This was agreed to by the Ministry of Finance. A Central Prohibition Committee was also set up by the Ministry of Home Affairs "to review the progress of Prohibition programmes, to coordinate activities in different States and to keep in touch with their practical problems."

### Nehru's Views

After the General Elections in 1962, several Chief Ministers desired that the working of Prohibition in different States should be reviewed once again by a High-level Committee with a view to plugging various loopholes in its implementation, more specially regarding illicit distillation. On behalf of the Planning Commission, I, therefore, convened a special meeting of all the Chief Ministers. This meeting was presided over by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. After two days of free and frank discussions, Pandit Nehru observed: "It would be a tragedy if the habit of drink spreads in a poor country like ours. It is also very clear to me that financial considerations should not stand in the way of implementing the policy of Prohibition. An Expert Committee should, however, recommend various ways in which the Prohibition programmes could be implemented more effectively."

The Planning Commission requested the then Chief Justice of India, Shri S. R. Das, to suggest a suitable person, preferably a retired Judge, to be the Chairman of a Study

Team on Prohibition. Justice Das recommended the name of Justice Tek Chand, a retired Judge of the Punjab High Court for this purpose. Other members of this Study Team appointed by the Planning Commission were Dr. A. M. Khusro, Professor of Economics, Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi, and Shri R. S. Krishnaswamy, I.C.S. Subsequently, Shri L. M. Shrikant, Secretary, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, was appointed a member of the Team. The Tek Chand Study Team submitted its detailed Report in two volumes towards the middle of 1964. It also made a number of recommendations for a phased programme of Prohibition in the country as a whole.

### **Tek Chand's Report**

The Central Prohibition Committee considered some of the recommendations of the Tek Chand Study Team and agreed that "every effort should be made to control and restrict the consumption of liquor." For this purpose, a number of interim measures were suggested:

- (a) Acceptance of the principle of local option.
- (b) No liquor shops near places of worship, educational institution, localities specially of Harijans, and highways.
- (c) Pay days to be uniformly dry everywhere, and restriction in business hours of liquor shops.
- (d) Imposition of general restriction on public drinking.
- (e) Special restrictions on drinking by young people, and drivers of vehicles.
- (f) Banning of advertisements of spirituous products.

Unfortunately, however, several State Governments, including Maharashtra and Mysore, relaxed various Prohibition Rules in their areas in the name of 'rationalisation'. In due course, other States also abandoned the Prohibition programmes mainly to augment their financial resources for

the Five Year Plans. Tamil Nadu gave up Prohibition, but reimposed it after a year or so owing to the pressure of public opinion. The net result is that, at present, total Prohibition exists only in Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. There is partial Prohibition in some States like Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

The results of relaxation in the Prohibition policy in different States have been disquieting. Instead of curbing illicit distillation in any sizable manner, the unrestricted flow of liquor and other intoxicants is spreading fast amongst the younger generation, and even women are being drawn into the drink habit. I, therefore, raised this question at the Governors' Conference in November 1972 and suggested that Prohibition should again be introduced in a more effective manner as a nation-wide programme. The Prime Minister took up this matter seriously and sent a note to the Congress President which was forwarded to the Chief Ministers of different Congress Governments. No serious notice appears to have been taken by the Chief Ministers even of the "concern" which was expressed by Shrimati Indira Gandhi in regard to the relaxation of Prohibition in different States.

### **Prohibition vs. Temperance**

It is often suggested by the critics of Prohibition that a much better and more practical policy would be to launch a strong and well-organised movement for Temperance, so that the people understand the evils of drinking and keep away from it of their own volition. This again is a mistaken argument. There is no shadow of doubt that public education is essential for making Prohibition a success. But without legal sanctions such educative propaganda would be a futile and pointless exercise. In several States today the Governments dole out a few lakhs of rupees to Nashabandi Mandals or Prohibition Boards every year for carrying on

propaganda amongst the people against drinking. Simultaneously, they ask the District authorities to open a larger number of liquor shops in their respective areas for earning more excise incomes. This is, to say the least, the limit of hypocrisy and double standards. Said Mahatma Gandhi: "We should not be deceived by the specious argument that India must not be made sober by compulsion and those who wish to drink must have facilities provided to them. The State does not cater for the vices of its people; we do not provide facilities for thieves to indulge their propensity for thieving." He continued: "Drink is more a disease than a vice. I knew scores of men who would gladly leave off drink if they could. Diseased persons have got to be helped against themselves."

### Loss of Excise Revenue

Critics point out that the introduction of total Prohibition in India would deprive various State Governments of their excise revenues from liquor totalling up to Rs. 350 crores a year. But it is conveniently forgotten that for every rupee that a Government receives from excise on liquor consumption, the people are obliged to throw away at least four rupees on this evil habit. Thus, if the State Governments lose Rs. 350 crores a year owing to their Prohibition programmes, the people in general would gain Rs. 1,400 crores for directly improving their living standards on food, clothing, housing, education and health. Today, the States vie with one another in mobilising more resources for their development plans and do not hesitate to open more liquor shops for tempting poor people towards liquor and toddy. To ruin people's physical, mental and moral health without scruples and, then, to use this tainted money for launching various welfare schemes is, indeed, a mockery of our national planning. This suicidal policy must be ended without further delay.

### Illicit Distillation

The prevalence of illicit distillation is also exaggerated beyond limits. The opponents of Prohibition policy allege that owing to this legislation almost every house and cottage has become a centre for the manufacture and sale of illicit liquor. Detailed enquiries by various Committees have shown that the percentage of illicit drinking generally ranges from 10 to 15 per cent. Such leakage is quite common even in the enforcement of other criminal laws. Even so, no sane person has ever advocated the abolition of Criminal Procedure Code simply because thefts and dacoities continue to take place in various parts of the country. Similarly, to ask for the abolition of Prohibition laws because of some illicit distillation would be highly irrational.

Furthermore, the hard addicts may be given even life-long permits for liquor so as to isolate them from the general public. Such licences should be issued on the recommendation of District-level Committees consisting of the Civil Surgeon, one social worker and a registered medical practitioner committed to Prohibition. The Government should undertake to supply liquor to these addicts **directly**, without enlisting the help of contractors or intermediaries who are bound to have a profit motive in this business. Moreover, foreign tourists ought to be exempted from the purview of Prohibition laws for obvious reasons. In the tribal areas the general policy may be to allow the Adivasis to manufacture and consume their traditional fermented beverages which contain a low percentage of alcohol. No liquor shops, however, should be allowed to be opened in these tribal regions.

### Betterment of the Poor

I do not view Prohibition merely as a moral or social policy. Our main anxiety has been the economic betterment of the poorer and more vulnerable segments of the popula-

tion. During my extensive tours as a Member of the Planning Commission, I visited the Durgapur Steel Plant sometime in 1962. I was shocked to hear from the General Manager that about 40 per cent of the weekly wages disbursed to the workers of this public enterprise were being drunk away on the pay day itself. Similar conditions prevail in almost all the big projects of the country, both in public and private sectors. When I toured Kerala some years ago, I was astonished to learn that, despite a variety of beneficial schemes under the Five Year Plans, the economic condition of the fishermen had remained stagnant because of the drink evil. In the absence of Prohibition, our planning process is like filling a vessel with milk and honey, with a number of 'leaking points' at the bottom. We should, surely, try our best to improve the implementation of the Prohibition programme with a view to checking illicit practices effectively. But to scrap Prohibition altogether would be like throwing the baby away with the bath-water. It is common knowledge that illicit distillation exists on a wide scale even in the 'wet' areas. The remedy lies in enforcing the current legislation more vigorously, as also to conduct well-planned public education for weaning away the people from drink.

Drinking today has acquired a status symbol and prestige. This must be liquidated by declaring that no permit holders will be appointed on any Government Committees, Boards or Corporation. This decision was taken by me in Gujarat during the President's Rule in 1971. Needless to mention that it had a very salutary effect on the minds of the people.

### National Defence

The Defence personnel too need not be granted any special exemptions. Tendering their evidence before the Planning Commission's Prohibition Enquiry Committee in 1955, all the three Service Chiefs had declared in unambi-

guous terms: "We would willingly fall in line with the rest of the country when a programme of nation-wide Prohibition comes into force." A nation whose Defence Forces get infected with the drink habit inevitably endangers its own political freedom. The truth of this statement dawned on me in a very convincing manner during the Indo-Pakistan Conflict in 1971. Our Armed Forces were able to acquire about a thousand square miles on the Kutch and Rajasthan borders within a few days. When I visited the Jawans after the end of hostilities and desired to know the reasons for their spectacular victory, the reply was prompt and forthright: "Sir, we are used to fighting even without food and water for days on end. But the Pakistani troops were busy with drinking in their bunkers; they fled fast as soon as we advanced towards them." The roots of drinking gradually go very deep into the national structure and erode the very foundations of freedom and Independence.

### In Other Countries

It is often argued that Prohibition has not succeeded in America or several other countries in Europe, and it would, therefore, be unwise to launch this experiment in India. The canting critics should, however, concede that all these countries, including the Soviet Union, are presently faced with a very difficult situation in regard to the evil effects of alcohol in public life. It is estimated that at least 50 per cent of the road, rail or air accidents are due to drunken drivers or pilots. In consequence, stringent laws have been enacted to punish the guilty drivers by cancelling their licences for very long periods. I am glad to learn that the United Arab Emirates have chosen to introduce Prohibition in their areas very strictly in order to reap the benefits of the Petro-Dollars for providing the basic necessities of life to their people, by giving the highest priority to housing, education and health programmes. Even advertisements of cigarettes and cigars have



been banned in these States. But in India we do not do even what other countries are doing, and go on merrily with the inter-State race for earning larger revenues from the curse of drink, irrespective of the calamitous consequences. Let us not forget the well-known Chinese proverb: "First, the man takes the drink; then, the drink takes the drink; and lastly, the drink takes the man". These three stages of drinking clearly indicate that what begins as a fashion ultimately ends up in death and disaster.

Happily, the Government of India announced a twelve-point minimum programme of Prohibition on the eve of the Gandhi Jayanti this year. I welcome this programme as a first step towards total prohibition throughout India within the next few years. Let us hope the State governments would now take up this matter seriously and prepare a phased plan of Prohibition without further delay.

## CHAPTER XIII

### Need for a National Consensus

We are all concerned about the current political and economic situation in the country. There is widespread unemployment, a continuous spiral of ever rising prices, phenomenal corruption in all walks of life and an out-dated educational system which has led to deep frustration among the youth. The electoral system with the massive support of black money and a variety of malpractices including booth capturing, has made a mockery of our democratic structure. Socialism and nationalisation are fast becoming synonyms for 'more pay and less work'; professional efficiency is going down to record levels. In the name of secularism all moral and ethical values are being thrown to the winds. It is no use blaming only the ruling party, all political parties must share the blame. In fact, each one of us has to be willing to shoulder part of the responsibility for this sorry and disquieting situation. While Gandhiji walked bare-footed through the villages bare-footed on the eve of India's freedom, a socialist had asked him for a message. The Mahatma replied: "Turn the searchlight inward"

#### A National Government?

It has often been suggested that in such a desperate hour this we should take urgent steps to form a National Government.

ment consisting of all political parties in the country. This is done during wars in the United Kingdom which has evolved a sound Parliamentary System over the centuries. In India, however, there has been no such tradition so far. Even during the 1962 Chinese invasion, no all-party Government was formed; the Pakistani invasions in 1965 and 1971 did not also lead to the formation of a national Cabinet. This is partly due to the fact that in India, unlike the United Kingdom, we have a multi-party system where the existing parties tend to split up further day by day. Even otherwise, it is felt that the constitution of a National Government, consisting of a spectrum of political parties of various hues, will not make for a strong and homogeneous administration; there would be endless delays in taking vital decisions owing to differences of opinion almost at every point. Emergencies call for urgent decisions and quick actions, and it is obvious that a Government formed of diverse groups will not be able to rise to the occasion. Even if it is possible to set up such a broadbased Government during wars, it may not serve much purpose in meeting the challenges of inflation, unemployment, corruption and economic stagnation.

### **'Partyless Democracy'**

Suggestions about a 'partyless democracy' have also been thrown up from time to time. It is contended that there should be direct elections on the basis of adult franchise at the village level, and the candidates should be elected through a consensus, and not on the basis of their affiliation to political parties. The Village Panchayats should elect their representatives to the District Panchayat and the District Panchayats to the Provincial Assemblies. The State Assemblies would send their representatives to the National Parliament. Thus, there will be direct elections at the base and indirect elections upwards up to the Apex level. The members of Parliament and the State Assemblies would, instead

of representing the political parties, represent the masses of people in general. Gandhiji did envisage such a partyless system of democracy, and Acharya Vinoba has been pleading for such an experiment. Shri Jayaprakash Narayan has also spoken about it quite frequently. But the fact remains that such a partyless Government on a national scale is not yet within the reach of practical politics. Theoretically, such a system exists today in Nepal where political parties have been banned ever since 1960. In effect, however, there is an all-pervading King's Party which fights the elections from the Village Panchayats onwards. Further, the National Panchayat does not enjoy the right of electing its leader to function as the Prime Minister of the Himalayan Kingdom. The whole Cabinet is nominated by the King and functions during his pleasure. It is also feared that such a partyless democracy would encourage the divisive forces of casteism, communalism and regional or even individual loyalties.

### Need for National Consensus

In my view, what is really required is the evolution of a system of National Consensus at least on vital issues like foreign policy, the system of elections, the education pattern, the food policy, the problem of unemployment, and corruption. Given the will to find a broad consensus on all these national problems, there is no reason why the Ruling Party and the Opposition cannot put their heads together, thrash out different problems threadbare and reach agreed conclusions for effective action. For example, during the last few years I tried to convene various conferences and seminars in Wardha and Sevagram to bring about a consensus on educational reform, concept of Trusteeship in Business and Industry, and the use of Devanagari as an additional script for modern Indian languages. Recently, I organised an all-India Seminar on Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development to evolve a national policy in this sphere. After free and frank

discussions for a few days, it was possible to arrive at definite conclusions based on a rational consensus, despite strong differences of opinion. I am, therefore, confident that it would be possible to formulate specific policies in various spheres of national life for tiding over the present crisis. It will, of course, require a strong determination to achieve results with a sense of emergency.

The idea of a democracy based on consensus was inherent in the age-old Panchayat System. Unanimous or near-unanimous decision by the Panchas of a village community was endowed with a divine sanctity, and 'Panch Parameshwar' was the conventional motto. During recent times, Rishi Vinoba Bhave has revived this idea through the Gramdan movement. Under this campaign the Gram Sabhas do not function under the 'simple majority' rule; they take decisions through a consensus. This does not connote complete unanimity but a broad agreement on various issues, without a recorded vote of dissent.

In brief, there could be no two opinions that the working of democracy in India merely on the basis of a simple majority vote cannot fit into the genius of the nation which is essentially founded on the principle of a consensus. The ruling party cannot afford to steamroll the minority voice in the Parliament in the name of democratic socialism. Such an attempt on its part would inevitably erode the roots of cooperation and generate the forces of disruption.

### Confrontation vs. Cooperation

It is, therefore, imperative that the present atmosphere of confrontation between the Ruling and the Opposition parties should yield place to active and fruitful cooperation. This could be achieved in a variety of ways. First, the Prime Minister could seek the advice of the Opposition leaders from time to time in a systematic manner on different national problems. I very well remember that during Pandit Nehru's

time there were Standing Committees on Food and Planning. These Committees, consisting of the leaders of all parties in the Parliament, were regularly attended by the members of the Planning Commission as well. There is no reason why such Standing Committees should not be revived with profit. Perhaps, one or two more Committees of this nature may be constituted, presumably on electoral reform and educational reconstruction. During discussions, every effort should be made to evolve agreed policies on the basis of a consensus.

Secondly, the existing "Informal" Consultative Committees of the Parliament should be made more meaningful. Currently, they are ineffective, involving wasteful expenditure on pointless discussions. It would, therefore, be desirable to constitute regular Parliamentary Committees for important subjects like foreign policy, defence, economic planning, food and agriculture and education. These Committees, representing all parties in the Parliament, would be able to exercise sufficient pressure on Government policies in a constructive manner. In fact, they should be integral parts of Parliamentary Democracy in India. The experience gained about such Committees in the United Kingdom and some other democratic countries has been quite rewarding. It should be feasible in these Committees to reach a consensus on various policies and programmes through detailed, patient and objective discussions. The members of the Opposition will, thus, feel a sense of participation in the process of decision-making in the administration. It is this sense of involvement which would make Indian democracy more dynamic and purposeful.

Even in the Parliament it should be possible to exercise greater elasticity in the functioning of Party Whips on various subjects. For instance, in matters which vitally affect the whole nation like food distribution, education, electoral laws and prohibition, the ruling party need not issue three-lined whips to its members. All the members of Parliament, irres-

discussions for a few days, it was possible to arrive at definite conclusions based on a rational consensus, despite strong differences of opinion. I am, therefore, confident that it would be possible to formulate specific policies in various spheres of national life for tiding over the present crisis. It will, of course, require a strong determination to achieve results with a sense of emergency.

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## CHAPTER XIV

### Electoral Reforms

It is admitted on all hands that the Electoral System in India needs some radical reforms with a view to making it less expensive and cumbersome. Today, a citizen of ordinary means finds it impossible to offer himself or herself as a candidate for election because the expenditure is really prohibitive. It is, therefore, essential that our election procedures are simplified and rendered cheap enough to enable an ordinary citizen to enter the contest for asserting his democratic rights. In the absence of such electoral reforms, our democracy is bound to degenerate into an oligarchy, depending on the machinations of a few wealthy business houses in the country.

#### Proportional Representation

It is often suggested that India should replace the existing electoral system by proportional representation, specially the list system prevailing in West Germany and some other European countries including Belgium, Sweden and Norway. It will, however, be noticed that the system of proportional representation has been in vogue, by and large, only in comparatively small countries. Bigger countries like the United States of America have never cared to adopt it in any of its forms. France tried it, but gave it up completely after bitter



pective of their party affiliations, should be free to express their opinions and cast their votes according to their convictions. Such freedom of expression would promote healthy democratic life in the country and discussions in an open atmosphere would, surely, fabricate a national consensus which would be of lasting value. After all, different political parties in a Parliamentary democracy are for the good of the people; the welfare of the Nation must never be sacrificed for furthering the vested interests of these parties.

### Silver Jubilee of our Constitution

It is a happy augury that we are currently celebrating the Silver Jubilee year of our Constitution. It would, therefore, be desirable that the basic principles of our Constitution, namely, democracy, socialism and secularism, are widely explained to the masses during this period so that the people become more conscious of their fundamental rights as well as the inherent duties. At a time when extra-Parliamentary agitations are being launched in different parts of the country and the atmosphere is surcharged with violence, conflict and civil disorders, the Government as well as non-official organisations, more specially educational institutions, should utilise this opportunity for carrying on vigorous public education in the essential principles of the Indian Constitution. During the year, the Ruling and the Opposition parties should endeavour to create a healthy climate for the establishment of a socialist democracy based on mutual cooperation, patient discussion and national consensus. This is the only practical way of strengthening democracy in India on stable foundations.

the Congress could render his initiative and direction quite ineffective and nugatory. Moreover, the elected President of America may not command even a working majority in the Senate or the House of Representatives. Such a situation is bound to lead to frustration and indecision in national as well as international affairs.

### Need for Healthy Conventions

We need not, however, be tied to the apron-strings of the British system of Parliamentary democracy; we should develop our own conventions and regulations for toning up the democratic structure on healthy lines. For example, any Member of Parliament or State Legislature who has been elected on the ticket of a recognised all-India political party, with a specific symbol, must automatically cease to be a Member if he crosses the floor or joins another party. I do not think any Code of Conduct or convention among various political parties would serve the purpose. Instead, there must be an unambiguous legislative provision in regard to defections. If necessary, even the Constitution should be suitably amended to root out the perversity of defections. I do hope that the Ruling party would introduce the *required* legislation in the Parliament without further loss of time.

Similarly, any Member indulging in unruly or violent behaviour within the House should be expelled for a sufficiently long period. Further, a Member hurling irresponsible charges against a Minister should be asked to substantiate them before a Special Committee of the House. If the charges are proved, the Minister concerned must go. In case they are found to be false and malicious, the Member concerned must resign forthwith.

### Some Suggestions

On the whole, I think we should confine ourselves at this stage to those reform proposals which do not seek to

experience. This system has a strong tendency to lead to multiplicity of political parties and groups in Parliament or State Assemblies. The inevitable result is the establishment of coalition Governments which end in political instability and internal friction.

### Indirect Elections

In the 'Gandhian Constitution for Free India', to which Mahatma Gandhi himself had contributed a valuable Foreword, I had envisaged a constitutional framework under which direct elections were to be held at the village Panchayat level, and indirect elections to the District Panchayats and State Assemblies. Subsequent experience has revealed that indirect elections too lead to considerable pressures on the limited number of voters, resulting in several types of corruption. As General Secretary of the Indian National Congress, I tried this experiment in the delegate elections of the party, and the results were quite unpalatable. I would, therefore, not like to press for indirect elections, except in some limited spheres.

### Presidential System

A few Constitutional experts have suggested that the Parliamentary system in India should be replaced by a Presidential form of Government, as in the United States. In my own view, the Constitution of India, framed by the Founding Fathers with great vision and wisdom, is quite competent to stand the test of the time, provided we build into it some checks and balances for curbing unhealthy trends and tendencies. It is true that the American President is elected for a term of four years and cannot be removed from office except for 'treason, bribery or other high crimes and misdemeanours'. He is also invested with wide executive and legislative powers under the Constitution. Nonetheless, he is obliged to function under several constraints and the two Houses of

## ELECTORAL REFORMS

to be included in the election returns. An unscrupulous candidate is, therefore, legally free to flout the legal maximum of election expenditure by adopting several subterfuges. For example, he may buy and pay for all the petrol needed for the election campaign before the date of election notification. He may also hire a number of vehicles needed for the campaign and pay for them in advance. It is, therefore, necessary to amend the existing rules suitably in order to remove these loopholes.

(4) Expenditure on motor vehicles constitutes a substantial portion of the election expenses of a candidate. The Election Commission has, therefore, suggested that in an Assembly Constituency the number of vehicles which could be used by a candidate should be limited to three, and in a Parliamentary Constituency to six. In order to be effective, the law should provide for full information being given by the candidate to the Returning Officer as to the vehicles which would be actually used by him and by his agents and workers during the electioneering period.

(5) It has also been suggested that big election meetings with sound-amplifiers should be limited to four. This would help in reducing the election expenses quite substantially.

(6) The Election Commission has recommended that public processions and demonstrations in which larger-sized banners are displayed should be completely banned. This would not only reduce the election expenses, but also help authorities in maintaining peace and order in the constituency.

In my opinion, costly stage shows, music, dance and similar forms of entertainment to attract voters should be positively discouraged.

(7) The Election Commission is of the definite opinion that the employment of paid canvassers should be debarred by the Election Law. Where any remuneration

be paid to the election agent of the candidate, it should be included in his account of election expenses.

(8) Another important item in election expenses is the printing of posters and placards. A suggestion has been made that this basic publicity should be done by the Election Commission, through the District Polling Officers, giving all the required information about the extent of the Constituency, the dates and places of polling, and the names and symbols of all the candidates, together with their election manifestoes. Although there are obvious difficulties in implementing this recommendation, I think the Election Commission should accept greater responsibility in regard to this basic publicity about elections in each Constituency. In addition, certain restrictions should be imposed on the size of the placards and posters to be published by the candidates, since the printing and exhibition of large-sized posters is very expensive.

(9) The Election Commission has also recommended that the interval allowed after the scrutiny of nominations for the withdrawal of candidates should be reduced to two days, and the minimum period prescribed for the election campaign should be reduced to 15 days. There should be no difficulty in accepting this suggestion.

(10) According to the existing rules, the use of transport for carrying voters to the polling booths on the election day is illegal. This is being evaded in various ways. It is essential to enforce it in future by banning all private mechanized vehicles on the polling days, except for purely official or medical purposes.

(11) The Representation of the People Act has mentioned a number of corrupt practices which must be avoided during the elections. For example, it is illegal to bribe the voters, and to promote feelings of enmity between different classes of the citizens of India on the basis of race, caste, community or language.

It is also an electoral offence to disturb the election meetings of other candidates. These rules are, unfortunately, not enforced strictly during the election campaigns. I think there should be some authority vested in the District Polling Officers that if these corrupt practices are detected even during the course of elections, they should be able to take quick action for debarring a particular candidate from continuing the contest. Where the evidence is overwhelming and documentary, there should be no difficulty in enforcing these rules even during the campaign.

These are some of the suggestions for the careful consideration of the Union Government and different political parties in the country. It is essential that a comprehensive Bill, incorporating some of these suggestions which have the support of the Election Commission as well, is introduced in the Parliament as early as feasible so that the Sixth General Elections to be held early in 1976 are free from those evils that corrupt the existing electoral procedures in the country and tend to reduce Indian democracy to a costly game of the rich and the privileged.

## CHAPTER XV

### Whither JP's Movement ?

The Bihar movement led by Shri Jayaprakash Narayan during the last one year or more has, undoubtedly, attracted wide attention in India and abroad. JP commands deep respect in the country for his selfless service and sacrifice, both before and after Independence. It is, therefore, quite natural that he attracts large crowds at his meetings in Bihar as well as other States of India. One may not agree with certain aspects of his movement. Even so, there is not a shadow of doubt that without his intervention there would have been large-scale violence and bloodshed in Bihar. Though there have been stray cases of violence during the Bihar movement, it must be conceded that JP has run his movement as basically peaceful and non-violent. Despite the brutal lathi-charge on him in Patna early in November last year, he has managed to keep the agitated students and workers under his control. Therefore, to accuse JP of inciting violence is very uncharitable.

#### Plus Points

Furthermore, Jayaprakash Narayan has succeeded in arousing the national consciousness of the people against the evils of corruption, inflation and unemployment. There could

also be no two opinions about his repeated stress on electoral and educational reforms. JP has been raising his voice against growing centralization of power and underlines the desirability of decentralizing both economic and political power at the village level. Under his leadership, masses of people not directly connected with party politics have demonstrated unusual courage to express their thoughts and feelings without fear and hesitation. It would, therefore, be wrong to label JP's movement as undemocratic or fascist. He has been trying in all sincerity to awaken the general public from slumber in order to resist evil in a disciplined and peaceful manner.

It is sometimes suggested that Satyagraha should have no place in a free and democratic India. In my view, even under democracy the people have every right to offer satyagraha when all other efforts to right a wrong fail to achieve the objective. Of course, Satyagraha should not be allowed to degenerate into *duragraha* for cheap and trivial purposes. Under a democratic set-up, satyagraha should be resorted to only when all other avenues have been explored and found ineffective.

### Minus Points

I should now like to mention some aspects of JP's movement which I do not relish. First, I do not see how the dismissal of the present Ministry and the dissolution of the Bihar Assembly would be able to solve the problems of rising prices, corruption and unemployment in a lasting manner. One would agree with JP that the electorate should have the right to recall its representative to the Assembly or the Parliament in case he utterly fails in the discharge of his duty. This would require an amendment of the existing Constitution, although in a big country like India it will not be easy to ascertain the wishes of large numbers. But to ask for the dissolution of the whole Assembly does not ap-



pear to be a very reasonable demand. Conceding such demands may encourage fissiparous tendencies in the country and endanger peace and stability. Experience in this regard in Gujarat has not been happy and one is not sure it would be different in Bihar.

Secondly, the association of various political parties, ranging from the extreme left to the extreme right, including the CPM and the Jan Sangh, has lent a distinct political colour to JP's movement. It is quite evident that these parties have extended their support to the movement for furthering their own narrow ends. They are trying to cash on JP's name for winning the support of the people. It is very doubtful whether these political parties of different hues and colours would be able to cooperate with one another during a combined election campaign against the Ruling party. Even if they succeed in doing so, they are bound to quarrel in case of winning a majority of seats and forming an alternative Government. Earlier experience in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh in this regard has not been impressive. It would, therefore, be much better if JP's movement is confined to people who do not belong to any political party and are free citizens of a free India. It is this 'overwhelming silent majority' which requires to be made vocal and conscious of its rights as well as duties. But to mix up Sarvodaya with politics would create un-ending confusion and misunderstanding, serving no useful purpose.

### Need for Viable Opposition

However, in a democracy it is essential to have a strong and viable Opposition. Unfortunately, the Opposition parties in India are already too many; they are not able to pull on together even when the Ruling party is unable to deliver the goods. It would, therefore, be a distinct gain to public life in India if JP openly organises a new, strong and progressive political party. It should not be a hotch-potch of

the existing parties; a People's Party of India, mainly consisting of young men and women prepared to run the country on Gandhian lines, would be a great asset to the country. JP may not hold any office in this new party, nor need he contest elections himself. But he should be its Founder and give it his full guidance even from day to day. Under the present circumstances, it is imperative to rid politics of impure means and foul methods. I think JP is ~~uniquely suited~~ to fulfil this task, provided he has the necessary will to do it.

## Gheraas and Bzants

So far as JP's Bihar movement is concerned, the technique of gheraos does not appeal to me. The gheraos were first employed by the CPM in West Bengal and the results were disastrous. It is definitely conducive to creating and maintaining an atmosphere of hatred and violence. It does not fit into the Gandhian strategy of non-violence. The strategy of Ministers, MPs and MLAs of the Government definitely creates an atmosphere of non-violence and non-violence. Too frequent bandhs are not in the interest of the people. Additionally, the Government is drifting towards the principle of non-violence and non-violence on quality. Government is not interested in quality, but not numbers, even in the present context. I am sure the Government will not be able to do so even now.

### Need for Comprehensive Legislation

Lastly, the failure of the army to meet the challenge of JP's movement was a major factor in its defeat. But to counter it, the army would have had to take more effective measures to ensure the success of its operations.

introduce far-reaching reforms in the existing electoral and educational systems, and to put down corruption with a firm and heavy hand. It is true that the Government has taken several definite steps during the last few months, specially against smuggling, hoarding, black-marketing and tax evasion. But these measures could not be called adequate; a number of hard decisions will have to be taken without further delay. Short of dissolving the Bihar Assembly, the Ruling party could accept almost all other suggestions of Shri Jayaprakash Narayan and, thus, create an atmosphere of constructive cooperation in the country.

On his own part, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan should concentrate on Bihar and demonstrate how democracy could be built up from the grassroots on Sarvodaya lines, cutting across narrow party politics. Trying to spread his 'total revolution' in other States by organising the Opposition parties against the Congress would engender a climate of confrontation rather than cooperation.\*

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\*These views were recorded before the imposition of Emergency on 25th June, 1975.

## Appendix

### ALL INDIA NATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

Sevagram, 14, 15, 16 October, 1972

#### STATEMENT ON 'CONCLUSIONS'

The All India National Education Conference was in Session on the 14, 15 and 16 October, 1972. It was inaugurated by the Union Minister of India, Shrimati Indira Gandhi, and presided over by Hon. Bhauman Narayan, Chairman of the All India Yashwantrao Chavan Education Trust and Governor of Gujarat. A good number of State Education Ministers, the Union Deputy Minister of Education, Vice-Chancellors of several Universities, distinguished educationists and a large number of House education workers from different parts of the country attended the Conference.

The Conference considered the working paper entitled 'Education: Education with Growth and Social Justice', prepared by the members of the Conference. After detailed discussion the following conclusions emerged:

1. Education at all levels should be integrated through useful and productive activities linked with economic growth and development, in both rural and urban areas.

Expansion should be planned, but not at the cost of quality.

2. The Courses of Study from the Primary to the University level should emphasise three fundamental things

- (i) Self-reliance, self-reliance and the use of work as an integral part of the educational programme;
- (ii) A spirit of nationalism and social responsibility, leading to involvement of students and workers in the development of community work; and

- (iii) Inculcation of ethical and moral values, and a proper understanding of the essential unity of and equal respect for all religions.

These Courses should include general knowledge of our composite cultural heritage, a brief history of the Indian freedom movement, emphasizing national unity, international cooperation, and the fundamental values of non-violence, democracy, social justice and secularism as enshrined in our Constitution.

A study of Gandhian Thought also should be introduced in the curricula of different subjects like economics, politics, education, sociology, and philosophy, at the secondary and university stages.

While controversy over words may be avoided, the term 'Basic education' should be preferred at primary and secondary levels.

3. The educational structure for various stages should be 10+2+3. After ten years of secondary education, there must be a large number of two-year diversified courses enabling the students to secure employment opportunities and settle down in life. Various Government departments could introduce their own diploma courses in accordance with their requirements. After the higher secondary stage, the first Degree course in the University should be of three years' duration, following by Post-Graduate and Research courses.

While the two-year Diploma courses have to be of a terminal nature, it should be open to students to pursue higher studies at any time in future.

Vacations should be pruned and adjusted for imparting intensive education according to local needs.

4. Primary and Secondary schools should be open to all children irrespective of caste, creed, community, religion, economic condition or social status. The 'neighbourhood school' concept suggested by the Education Commission should be given a fair trial. From the standpoint of social justice, plenty of merit-cum-means scholarships ought to be made available at different stages of education so that no student is deprived of the highest available education in the country simply because his or her parents happen to be poor.

5. While a common school system is desirable from the angle of social justice and national cohesion, the State Governments should give positive encouragement to educational institutions for conducting new experiments in teaching methods, examination system, arrangement of subjects in the curriculum, preparation of text-books and the training of teachers. Emphasis on uniformity must not hamper innovations and research in the educational sphere. There should be no undue interfer-

ence by the State in educational matters. The concept of 'Autonomous Colleges' recommended by the Education Commission may now be implemented in a positive manner.

6 Though serious efforts should be made to root out several mal-practices in private institutions, the administration should not succumb to pressures for taking over the entire responsibility of running secondary schools and colleges.

7. The medium of instruction at the primary and secondary stages is already the mother-tongue or the regional language in all the States. Urgent steps may now be taken to adopt regional languages as media of education at the University level as well.

The use of Nagari as an alternative script for Indian languages should be encouraged.

8. With a view to hastening this educational reform, it is necessary that all-India competitive examinations, for Civil and Military services, should be conducted through the regional languages and candidates selected on the strength of a quota allotted to each State on a rational basis. To preserve the all-India character of these Services, the candidates after selection should be imparted a good knowledge of Hindi and English languages, as also a broad acquaintance with national history, culture, Indian Constitution and economic planning.

9 The existing system of examination exercises a crippling effect on the physical, mental and moral capacities of the students. It is, therefore, essential to reform it in a radical manner, without any further delay. In addition to the external examination, there should be adequate stress on continuous internal assessment by each subject-department so that undue emphasis on the final examination as the sole determinant of success is reduced. Practical work and viva voce tests have to be encouraged.

In sum, the examination system should not only assess the intellectual attainment of students but also take into account their active participation in productive and development activities, co-curricular programmes, social service, regularity in attendance and general behaviour.

10. In both public as well as private recruitment, every effort should be made to delink employment with Degrees. Existing recruitment rules may be suitably amended. This would discourage undue rush for admissions to Universities, eliminate corrupt practices in examinations and encourage progressive educational development on a sound basis.

11 No educational reform could be sustained without definite improvement in the quality and training of teachers.

profession must fulfil its obligations in imparting good education to the students, it is the duty of the State and the people to raise their social status and dignity and make them free from financial worries.

Teachers should not get involved in party politics; they should formulate a proper code of conduct in this respect. The '*Acharya Kul*' project initiated by Vinobaji could be utilised in this connection by the teaching profession.

12. It is essential that parents at all levels ought to be actively involved in the crucial task of educational reconstruction. To this end, parent teacher associations should become a regular feature in schools and colleges. In fact, each home should be developed as a basic educational unit in the real sense of the term.

13. Students should be actively associated in the policy-making processes of educational reform. Students' unions could be utilised for enforcing self-discipline and creating a sense of greater responsibility.

The youth should be made to understand that the present methods of violence would inevitably lead to counter-violence and imperil the very foundations of our democratic structure.

14. It is a matter of real concern that 70 per cent of our population is still illiterate, despite various schemes in this direction during the last 25 years. Concerted efforts should, therefore, be made to impart 'functional' literacy to the masses so as to promote greater efficiency in their skills, besides the creation of better civic consciousness among the people. Students and teachers should be drawn into this national campaign as a part of their community service activities.

15. It is desirable that games and sports are developed in a big way in schools and colleges and promising talent is properly selected and encouraged.

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Education must fulfil its obligations in imparting good education to students, it is the duty of the State and the people to raise their status and dignity and make them free from financial worries.

Teachers should not get involved in party politics; they should formulate a proper code of conduct in this respect. The 'Acharya Kri' object initiated by Vinobaji could be utilised in this connection by the teaching profession.

12. It is essential that parents at all levels ought to be actively involved in the crucial task of educational reconstruction. To this end, parent-teacher associations should become a regular feature in schools and colleges. In fact, each home should be developed as a basic educational unit in the real sense of the term.

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